



THE THREE
GAYS
IN MAINE

ETHEL C. BROWN



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“IT ACTS LIKE AN ANIMAL”

THE THREE GAYS IN MAINE

BY

ETHEL C. BROWN

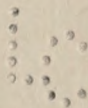
Author of

"The Three Gays"

"The Three Gays at Merryton"

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The Three Gays in Maine

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Introduction

A HOUSE made of gray shingles sits perched like a nest high on a cliff overlooking the ocean. Winds straight from the open sea blow across it; winds from fragrant hemlock and spruce forests; winds from spicy meadows of waving grass and sweet fern. There is no dust. There are no germs. The air is as fresh and pure as air can be.

There is no driveway to the house. Grass and flowers grow around the piazza steps. Groups of evergreen trees are scattered about but not so thickly as to shut off the view of the sea and sky. Farther away the woods are as dense as primeval forests. A grassy path leads downhill to the tiny cottage where the Widow Rover and her son live; and with them her brother, Captain Grampus. Mrs. Rover is washing the supper dishes in the Gays' kitchen, singing softly as she works. There is no other sound

save the deep murmur of the sea, ever present, the answering echo of the wind in the trees, and the twilight song of the birds. How peaceful and still it seems to those who have just come from the rush and roar of the city!

A group of people is gathered at one end of the long piazza which extends around three sides of the house. They are watching the sun set over the wonderful Camden Hills, lying just far enough away to look mysterious and enchanted, like hills of fairy-land.

The people are old friends of ours first met in "The Three Gays." We recognize each one in turn. There is Mr. Gay, with a twinkle in his eye, as though he is on the point of saying something funny; curly-headed Jack is sitting on his knee. There is Mrs. Gay, looking off over the water, with the blue of the ocean reflected in her eyes and the warmth of the sunset glow in her soft hair. Roger is perched on the piazza rail, and Kathryn is near by, her golden curls flying in the breeze.

A year has passed since we saw "The Three Gays in Merryton." The old farmhouse is

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closed for the first time in many years while our friends Bijah and Aunt Sally are out West taking care of Bijah's sick brother. That is why the Gay family have come to spend the summer on an island in Maine; a familiar and beloved spot to Mr. and Mrs. Gay, who have spent many summers here when the children were so little that now they scarcely remembered it at all.

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The Three Gays in Maine

The Three Gays in Maine

CHAPTER I

THREE LAZY GAYS

"WHAT lazy people!" exclaimed Mrs. Gay, as she threw open the upper part of the Dutch door and looked out. The three children were lolling about in steamer chairs and hammocks. It was the day after their arrival on the island. They were still sleepy after the long, beautiful water trip.

"It is nice to be lazy just at first," said Kathryn, stretching her arms luxuriously and falling back into the depths of the hammock.

"Four whole months to do just as we please," said Roger. "No lessons, no school. And we're going to have jolly larks." Roger swung back and forth delightedly.

"Not a thing to do but have a good time!"

piped Jack from the big canvas chair. "Oh, it's corking, corking, corking!"

Mrs. Gay closed the Dutch door behind her, seated herself comfortably in a steamer chair and looked at the children. Then she laughed a soft little laugh.

"You are drinking in the Maine air and the ocean view, and it makes you sleepy at first," she said. "And a wonderful view like this that you have before you must 'sink in,' of course. But you surely do not want to waste four precious months in just 'having a good time,' as you say. Dear me, how bored you would all be before the summer was over! Why not have the summer count for something?"

"How, Mama? What do you mean?" asked Kathryn.

"Well, I can think of several schemes," said Mrs. Gay, thoughtfully.

The children sat up and looked more wide awake. Their mother's schemes were always sure to be interesting ones.

"I have been thinking," she went on, "of all the fascinating things there are to do in a place

like this. There are collections to make, for instance. One of you might collect flowers and learn their names; one might press leaves and learn about the trees. There is no end to the things. All you have to do is to choose. At the end of the summer we might have an exhibition; prizes, too, perhaps, for the best collections. How do you like that idea?"

"I love flowers," said Kathryn. "I might have an herbarium like the one Grandfather had."

"That would be lovely," said her mother. "It is great fun to press flowers, they are so beautiful. You would learn their names and label each one; and learn all about them, too."

"I'd like to collect all sorts of sea things," said Roger. "And I would like to learn about the wild birds."

"Capital!" cried Mrs. Gay. "Wait until you have been down on the rocks and beaches at low tide. There are wonderful sea pools here."

"I got two stunning pebbles this morning before breakfast," remarked Jack, feeling in his pockets. "One was bright red and the other

was green with a yellow stripe. Where are they, I wonder?—Oh, I remember, I put them under my pillow when I made my bed.”

“That’s a good safe place, Jacky,” laughed Roger. “I’m glad you don’t make my bed.”

“I wouldn’t make your bed!” retorted Jack. “Well, what I was going to say was, I think I shall collect pretty stones.”

“That is a good idea,” said his mother. “And why don’t you press leaves and learn the different trees? I will show you how.”

“I think I should like to do that,” said Jack.

“The best thing about making collections,” said Mrs. Gay, “is that you have so many adventures while making them, and you learn so many unexpected things besides. How could any one want to be lazy when there are so many nice things to do? Perhaps you would like to know what I am going to do. Well, I am going to try and braid baskets like those the Indians make. There is sweet grass growing here, they say. The Indians used to come here every year to get it. I am going to try to find it.”

"Well, it looks as though we might have a jolly exhibition, anyhow," said Roger. "We can give the Jamison boys a big surprise by and by."

"I am glad the Jamisons are to be so near us," said Mrs. Gay. "Their cottage is only a short distance away. You will have fine times together."

"I wish there were some little girls for me to play with," said Kathryn.

"Which one of your little friends would you most like to have come and visit you, Kate?" asked her mother.

"Oh!" cried Kathryn, bouncing upright in the hammock, "Ann! Ann Farthingale! I wish she could come. Do you think she could?"

"I wish she might, the dear child," answered Mrs. Gay, with a bright smile at Kathryn. "I was quite sure that you would choose Ann; so sure that I wrote yesterday to invite Miss Farthingale and Ann to visit us."

"Oh, I hope she'll come! I hope they'll come!" sang Kathryn. She was thoroughly awake now.

"And the fellows are coming week after next.

We shall have a chance to get acquainted with the place before they get here. I'm going to start in to-morrow and do things," said Roger, beginning to walk up and down.

"So am I!" cried Jack, sitting on the piazza rail.

"Do things?" inquired a voice from somewhere behind them. Turning, they saw their father's head sticking out of the door. "Do things?" he repeated. "Suppose you start now instead of waiting until to-morrow. I have an errand for you to do. I would like to have you go down and see Captain Grumpus. You will find him outside his fish house, probably. Tell him that we will go for a sail to-morrow afternoon if he can take us and if there is a good wind. And ask him for three good-sized lobsters. You can each carry one, I guess. That will save him the trouble of bringing them himself; he has rheumatism and hates to walk up hill, I know."

"Will you take these magazines to him too, please?" said Mrs. Gay. "He loves to read, and books are scarce on the island."

CHAPTER II

CAPTAIN GRUMPUS

CAPTAIN GRUMPUS was sitting on a bench outside his fish house door, smoking a corn-cob pipe. He was a rather fierce-looking object. His cap was tilted at a queer angle; he had a long, grizzled red beard and a ruddy, weather-beaten face; and he wore a pea-jacket, faded into all the colors of the rainbow, brown overalls and rubber boots. He seemed to be asleep, for he did not move as the children drew near. The fish house looked very interesting. All sorts of "sea things" lay about; ropes, rudders, oars and fish nets. A pile of lobster pots lay neatly stacked beside the door. There was a delightfully fishy smell about the place.

"Do you s'pose he is asleep?" inquired Jack in a "stage whisper." "I guess he likes to be lazy, anyhow."

"Lazy, young feller!" exclaimed the captain suddenly in a hoarse roar that made the chil-

dren jump into the air with surprise. "Do you know," he went on, opening one eye and fixing it upon the frightened Jack, "that I was up this mornin' at three o'clock, a-gittin' in lobsters? An' my day's wuck done afore five? Hey? What time was you up? Hey?"

Jack was too frightened to speak. It was not until the captain opened the other eye and took his corn-cob pipe from his mouth that Jack saw that there was a twinkle in his eyes and a look about his mouth not altogether fierce. A second look into those keen, gray, far-sighted eyes and at the mouth with its good-natured curve convinced him that Captain Grampus was not fierce at all.

"I didn't get up till seven," said Jack, faintly.

"There! What did I tell yer!" roared the captain. "These rusticators come down here 'n' see a hard wuckin' man a-restin' a minute from his labors, 'n' they call him lazy. Wall, what was it yer come fur?"

"Papa says we should like to go sailing to-morrow afternoon if you think the wind will hold," said Roger.

Captain Grampus squinted at the sky and nodded.

"Wind'll hold, I reckon. Ter-morrer'll be a good day. Wot time?"

"Two o'clock," replied Roger. "And we should like three good-sized lobsters, please. We will take them home with us."

Their new friend shook the ashes from his pipe, rose stiffly and walked into the fish house, the children at his heels. Going to what seemed a big chest in one corner, he lifted the lid and took out three bright red lobsters, weighed them carefully and handed one to each of the children.

"Why, they are warm!" cried Kathryn.

"Jest been biled," said the captain. "Was swimmin' this mornin'; bright green then; you'd oughter see 'em alive."

"I wish I could," said Roger.

"Git up at three o'clock some mornin' 'n' I'll take yer lobsterin'; or, hold on, I'll wait a bit fer yer; make it five o'clock."

"Oh, I'll go with you, Captain Grampus!" cried Roger.

"So will I!" cried Kathryn and Jack. "If I wake up," added Kathryn.

"I think I shall wake up," said Jack.

"Done!" declared the captain. "Ter-morrer mornin' at—five. But ye'll oversleep an' fergit ter come. Landlubbers ain't used ter gittin' up early."

"I shall be there," said Roger. "You can count on me. Five o'clock. I won't forget."

The old fisherman looked keenly at Roger and nodded. "You'll be here, I know yer will," he said.

Captain Garry Grumpus stood at the door of the fish house chuckling as he watched the three small figures toiling up the path with the three good-sized lobsters. Then he threw back his head and roared. "Smokin' in my sleep! Ha! Ha! That's a good one!" he chuckled hoarsely, slapping his knee.

CHAPTER III

AN EVENTFUL MORNING

THE following morning was an eventful one for Roger. It began with his trip after lobsters with Captain Grumpus. He was the only one to keep the appointment. Kathryn and Jack did not wake until seven o'clock, and by that time the captain and Roger were returning with a good haul of lobsters in the bottom of the boat.

Roger found himself well repaid for getting up early. Is not every one always repaid for it? The early morning air, so pure and fresh; so different from what it is at any other time of day; the beautiful sunrise colors in the sky which fade away quickly; the fun of doing something new and "different" appealed to Roger's sporting instinct. Then the row out with the jolly captain was a treat in itself. Captain Grumpus was one of the few remaining fishermen who despised the newfangled "puff

boats" and used gasoline on his fishing boat only when absolutely necessary. Roger had a practical lesson in rowing and managing a dory. He learned, too, how to row "standing up" with crossed oars, which he had never seen done before.

"There goes my nevvvy, Charley Rover," remarked the captain as a saucy little motor boat went prancing beyond their bows and soon left them far behind. The young man standing motionless in the bow, wearing, like the captain, a big rubber apron, waved his hand to them as he passed and sang out a cheery good-morning. A dog stood, like a sentinel, in the bow of the dory.

"He knows how ter manage a boat all right, thet boy," said the captain proudly. "He's been on the water all his life. Learned everythin' from me. His father was drowned, yer know, in thet big storm. Wall, Jack likes ter go fast an' save time, he says. Says I'm an ole fogey. Wall, p'raps I am. But time ain't much object ter me. I git in my lobsters, an' then I rests. Here's my float. Green an' red. I

painted it myself. See my initials, 'G. G.' Garry Grumpus, thet's my name."

The captain pulled up the little green and white "bob" of wood and then began to draw up the rope, hand over hand, until at last the slats of the lobster pot appeared. Then with a strain and a boost up it came and rested, with water pouring from it, on the boat's edge.

"Hullo, there!" cried the captain, peering in between the slats. "There they are, hey? Crawled in the hole there, and they didn't hev sense enough ter crawl out agin. Wa'n't thet stupid, now?"

With a dexterous motion of the hand the wriggling green lobsters were taken from the cage through a door which the captain opened in the side, and then tossed to the bottom of the boat. There were three big ones, and a little one. Captain Grumpus looked doubtfully at this last. Then he drew from his pocket a wooden measuring stick, measured the lobster, and with a shake of the head threw it back into the sea.

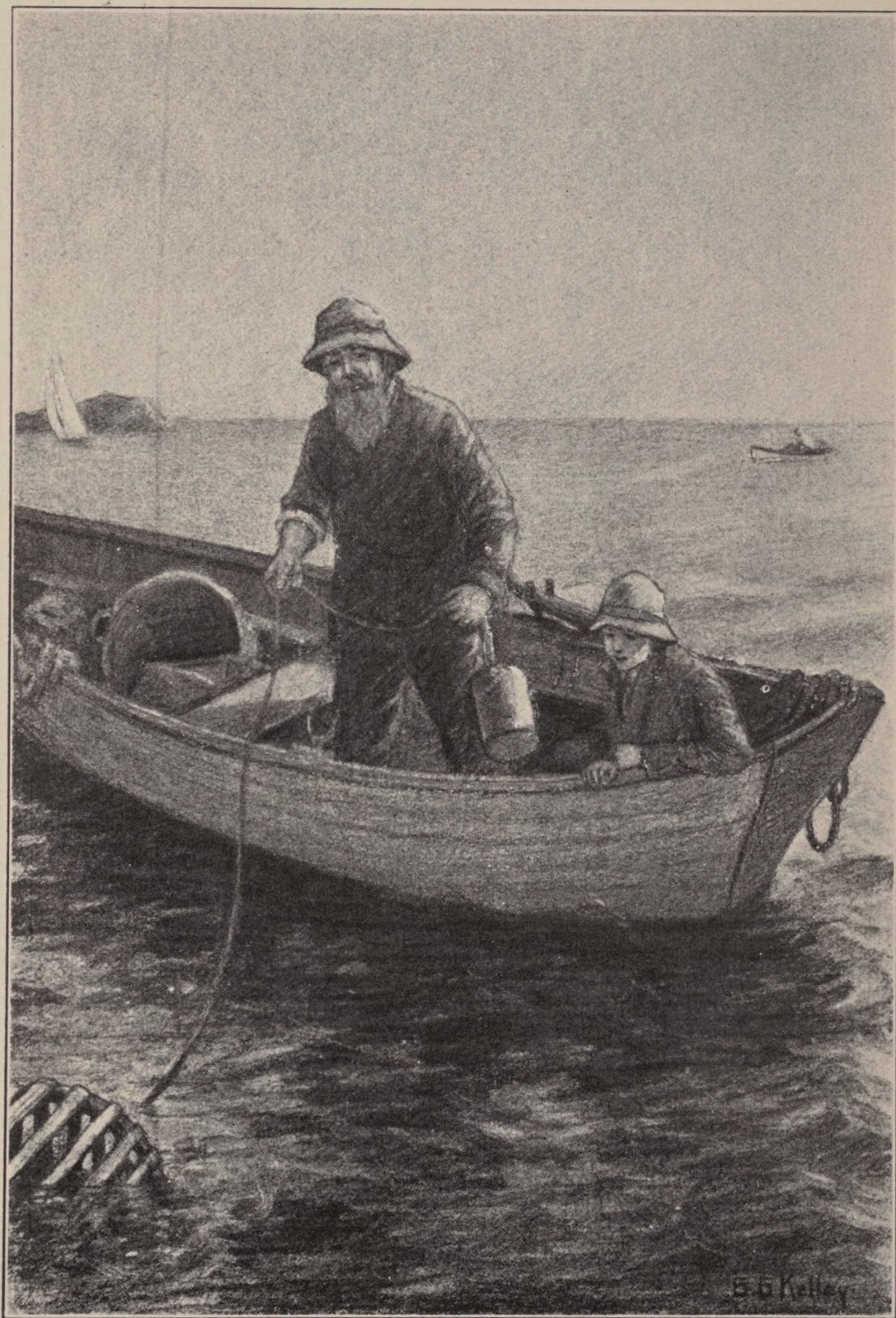
"There! Grow a while an' come agin!" re-

marked the captain as he baited his lobster pot, and fastened the door, leaving the opening ready for the next catch. Then splash it went into the water; the cord was let out until once more the wooden bob floated on the surface.

"Charley's is yaller, with 'C. R.' on it; an' Bob Sands's is red an' black with 'B. S.,' an' so on," said the captain as he bent again to the oars on his way to the next lobster pot. "There's Bob now," he added, pointing to where a little motor boat was "chug-chugging" through the water. Roger watched the boat skim swiftly toward the red and black bob, curve gracefully and stop at exactly the right spot. Down went the man's arm, up came the rope and, soon after, the lobster pot. Then away went the boat again, the man standing motionless in the bow. It looked very easy; much easier than rowing, Roger thought.

"Why did you throw away that lobster, Cap'n?" asked Roger.

"Thet was a 'short.' Didn't measure up ter the right size. It's agin the law ter ketch 'shorts,'" was the reply.



THE CORD WAS LET OUT

The catch was a good one. The captain and Roger were in high spirits as they rounded the point and saw once more the little beach and the grassy slope leading to "Eagle's Nest." The sun was higher now. It was nearly seven. The mysterious light of early morning was gone.

"I guess Kit and Jack will be sorry they didn't wake up," said Roger. "I've had a great time."

"Glad yer come," said the captain heartily. "Come agin. You're the right sort. I knew ye'd come. Wall—I'll see ye-all at two this arternoon."

CHAPTER IV

OTHER DISCOVERIES

IN the meantime Kathryn and Jack, though late in rising, were not behindhand once they were thoroughly awake. They were ready to make discoveries too. After breakfast they watched their mother scatter crumbs on the piazza roof, just under her window. It did not take long for the birds to discover the crumbs. First a sparrow came, then another ; by and by a big, fat robin came, stayed a while and then flew away. But he returned. After him came some juncos, by twos and threes, until there was quite a flock of them. At first, the least movement frightened them, but they soon grew used to seeing people in the window, and pecked at the crumbs quite unconcernedly, cocking their little heads and hopping about in such a cunning way that the children laughed aloud, which

caused them to fly into the air and off like a gust of wind.

"Oh, dear, we have frightened them away," said Kathryn.

"Never mind. They will come again," said her mother. And in a minute or two they did come, looking about suspiciously and ready to fly at the least sound or movement near them.

"We mustn't laugh again," said Jack.

"Think how it would seem to have to be on the lookout all the time for possible danger as these little birds are," said Mrs. Gay. "There is not a second that they are not on their guard. Cats, squirrels and other enemies are watching constantly to catch them at an unguarded moment."

"How awful!" exclaimed Kathryn. "I should be frightened all the time. Why, I should not have any fun at all for fear something might happen to me."

"But they don't seem so afraid of us as they were," said Jack. "See, that little one came quite near. See him look at us!"

"Dear little thing," said Mrs. Gay. "They

are trustful creatures, and soon become friendly when they know we do not mean to hurt them. But they must be on guard. All animals have to be. And I have heard that most of them get caught unawares sooner or later. Hardly any of them 'die in their beds.' See, there goes the robin with a fat worm in his bill. I saw him fly past a moment ago. He must have a nest very near. Now we will scatter some more crumbs and leave them."

As the children came out upon the piazza below, they could hear the pat-patter of tiny feet on the roof above. The crumbs must be disappearing fast.

It did not take Kathryn and Jack long to decide what to do first. Down they raced to the beach, past Mrs. Rover's tiny cottage no bigger than a nutshell, but so neat and pretty! An old-fashioned flower garden was at one side. In front was a darling little porch with vines growing over it. At the far end of the beach stood Captain Grampus's fish house. But the captain was not in sight. The children danced and ran on the hard sand and frolicked in

the waves. Jack filled his pockets with pretty stones. Then they started to walk back along the shore.

The tide was low. All sorts of curious sea things lay among the seaweed and rocks. There were starfish, limpets clinging to the rocks, shells of various sizes, shapes and colors; funny little crabs that walked backwards or sideways or "any old way," Jack said, that they chose. A very convenient thing to be able to do. These crabs nipped dreadfully with their small, sharp claws, as Jack found to his cost when he tried to take one up. There were big, horrid-looking jellyfish lying about, not at all pleasant to touch. There were lovely sea pools and rocks covered with pink and green and brown coral-like crust.

Kathryn, wandering about among the rocks, came upon a wonderful sea cave, big enough to stand up in. There was a foot of water in it, left by the high tide, which had filled it. The floor, walls and ceiling were covered with beautiful, crushed-strawberry color, green and brown. Weird reflections danced on the walls and ceil-

ing. There was a smooth stone inside, made on purpose to sit on, so that one might look at the water, and down into its depths, and watch the tiny sea creatures run about. The seaweed floated dreamily to and fro. It was cold and dark and still in the cave. There seemed to be a strange hush of expectancy there. How different it must be when the tide came roaring and bellowing into it!

Kathryn looked at the walls and ceiling and felt sure that something must live in so beautiful a place. Perhaps a mermaid lived there. It was just the place for a mermaid's dwelling. There was a silvery echo that came and went from under the rock somewhere. It seemed like a dream, so far away from everything. Suppose the mermaid should come out from underneath that dark crevice in the corner, glide through the water, gleaming and fascinating, with her long green hair floating round her. How that long green seaweed floated wide in the pool, and how the reflections danced and gleamed!

Suppose the mermaid should come and invite Kathryn to come down under the water, where

those green and yellow and red reflections were. Down, down to the sea caves. If she reached up a white, moist hand and drew Kathryn down! Would she refuse to go? Suppose the mermaid caught and held her there, in that enchanted cave, until the tide came booming in and drowned her!

A hoarse roar and a thump from outside somewhere brought Kathryn to her feet with a jump, and out of the cave into the sunlight. It was like coming back from a dream into commonplace life again. Further along the shore she could see her mother and Jack bending over a pool.

"Hallo!" cried Jack, beckoning excitedly. "Come and see the sea amem—anem—amemonies!"

"Sea anemones, you mean, Jacky," laughed his mother.

Kathryn found them in front of a charming little pool, lined with floating brown seaweed. Mrs. Gay pushed this aside and there Kathryn beheld the first sea anemones that she had ever seen. The biggest ones were about as big as

one's fist, of a golden brown color. They were spread open like flowers.

"Here is a green one," said Mrs. Gay, pushing more seaweed aside. "And just look at this dear little baby one. There is one that is bright red. It looks like a strawberry. See, is it not beautiful?"

Jack reached out and touched the big brown anemone with his finger. Instantly it closed up and was nothing but a round bunch.

"Ah, you have frightened it," said his mother. "It had its mouth open to catch its dinner, you see. Now it knows that there is danger near. It will not spread open for a long time. Like the birds, fish and all animals, it has enemies everywhere."

"It acts like an animal," said Kathryn. "Isn't it funny? Is it an animal? It looks like a flower, too."

"Do you remember the pitcher plant that we found in Merryton?"

"Yes, yes," answered Jack and Kathryn. "It caught flies and held them in its pitcher."

"Well, this is something like that. I mean,

it is like an animal and like a vegetable, too. It seems to be a sort of connecting link, doesn't it? You never find them except below the water line. It is covered at high tide. Dear me, here is the tide coming to remind us of it!"

Sure enough, the tide had risen swiftly while their backs were turned. It had reached their feet. There was nothing to do but beat a retreat. Climbing up over the rocks, they took a short cut home through the woods, and soon, to the children's surprise, came to the side piazza of "Eagle's Nest."

They found Mr. Gay, watering pot in hand, bending over a rock that lay near the piazza. He stood up as they approached.

"This hollow rock will make a capital bird bath," he said. "I have just filled it with water. We will keep it full of fresh water all the time, and I think we shall see something interesting. The woods about the house are full of birds."

"And they must have to go some distance for water," said Mrs. Gay. "They will enjoy this bath hugely, and so shall we, in a different way."

"I wish I had thought to get some bird houses," said Mr. Gay. "If we ever come here again I shall get a couple in town and put them up on trees near the house so the birds will build in them."

"We might send for one," suggested Mrs. Gay.

"Couldn't we make one, Papa?" asked Roger. "I saw a small, hollow stump, with the bark on it, on the wood-pile this morning. Why wouldn't that do? Wait a minute. I will get it."

"Aha!" exclaimed Mr. Gay, examining the stump which Roger brought. "I believe we can make a bird house of that. It needs a roof and a little platform. There is a knot-hole already there which we will make bigger. Capital!"

Mr. Gay tucked the stump under his arm and strode off in the direction of the studio-workshop, followed by the children.

"There comes Roger!" suddenly exclaimed Jack. "I wonder where he has been all this time."

“He looks excited,” said Kathryn.

“Let’s go and meet him,” said Mr. Gay, putting down the stump.

So they all walked slowly to meet Roger.

CHAPTER V

ROGER HAS A FRIGHT

ROGER had all the rest of the morning to do as he pleased. He had made up his mind to "do things" to-day. He decided to make a tour of investigation. Perhaps he might make a discovery for his collection. He started down the path, crossed the meadow, covered now with daisies and buttercups, with delicious wild strawberries hiding in the tall grass. Roger walked slowly, with many pauses for refreshment. At the end of the meadow he could see some bars and beyond them, thick woods.

Roger climbed the bars and found himself in a lovely forest. The path stretched forward over soft moss, past lichen-covered rocks, under fragrant hemlock and spruce branches. Birds sang in the trees overhead; wonderful many-colored mushrooms grew about. There were solid masses of delicate twin flower. A hermit thrush kept Roger motionless for a long time.

Soon the path opened on a great sea of ferns that swayed to and fro gently in the wind. They were fragrant, too. Roger laughed as he walked along the tiny path right through the middle of this green sea. Then woods again, and the sound of the sea toward the right. He could see a glint of blue in that direction. But he kept on. He must find where the path led.

Soon an odd sound struck his ears; Roger could not make out what it was. It sounded like a sharp cluck or call. It grew nearer and louder as Roger advanced. Before long he stepped into the open. The light dazzled him for a moment. Then he took a step forward and stopped short in amazement.

On the top of a dead tree, not twenty feet from where he stood, was a huge mass of sticks several feet across. It was a nest!

At the moment that Roger spied the nest, two immense birds flew up from it with a great whirring of wings, filling the air with deafening cries. He had heard the voices of these birds back in the woods, but how different they had been! Before the birds were talking to their

young, or to each other with voices cooing and soft in expression, in spite of their hoarseness. Now there were anger, fright and menace in the tone. Roger stood breathless and watched the two immense creatures as they circled high in the air, screaming constantly. Then he looked at the nest.

“Well,” he thought, “that’s the biggest nest I ever saw. What can they be? Eagles, of course. Nothing else so big. I’d like to see what’s in that nest. Young birds, of course. The old birds would tear me to pieces if I went near it. Poor things! I’ll walk by quickly, so as to show them that they needn’t be scared.”

In order to walk by the nest, it was necessary to approach nearer to it. There was no other way. Roger hesitated and then hurried forward.

But at this the birds redoubled their cries and descended with terrible rapidity in narrowing circles. As Roger neared the tree one of the birds swooped directly at him with a scream that sent his heart “down into his boots.” Roger ducked his head and turned back toward the woods as the second bird swooped at him and

then turned and flew round his head. Roger, bending low, and uttering a shriek of terror almost as loud as that of his pursuers, plunged into the woods, where, instinct told him, the branches of the trees would protect him. But he was so terrified that he continued to run as fast as his legs could carry him, hearing all the time the same horrible hoarse cries above him. He knocked his head against tree branches; he scratched his hands on briars; at last his foot caught on a root and he fell headlong into the sea of ferns. There he lay still and listened; then he drew a cry of relief. The cries had ceased at last!

“Mama said I might have adventures in learning about birds and things,” thought Roger, with a rueful laugh. “I seem to have begun, all right. I fancy I had rather a narrow escape. Well, they’re gone now. I think I’ll turn off to the right where I saw some blue through the trees. I can hear the sea, too.”

Roger picked himself up from his fragrant bed of ferns and went toward the opening among the trees. Sure enough, it led to a mossy slope over-

hanging a gulch. The tide was pounding and roaring into this gulch ; now drawing back like a wild animal about to spring, then flinging itself fiercely upon the land, as though to tear it to pieces, which was exactly what it was doing, a little at a time. It was fascinating to watch the waves. Roger stooped and was peering down at the water, when all of a sudden he noticed a black shadow on the rock in front of him. It grew quickly larger. Roger turned dizzy as he heard at the same moment that terrible, familiar cry, and realized that the birds were above him !

There was not a moment to lose. A leap and a plunge backward brought the terrified boy under the branches of a hemlock tree that stood by the cliff's edge. Rolling over and over he reached other protecting branches. He was safe in the woods once more. The birds had followed him for half a mile. Would he ever dare to leave the woods ?

Roger fled back to the bars, his heart beating like a sledge hammer. Skirting the meadow cautiously under bushes and trees, he found himself before long in sight of the house. There

were his father and mother walking down the path with Kathryn and Jack near by. Far up in the sky Roger could see two black specks floating about; now and then he was sure that he could hear a faint, a very faint, cry.

"They were eagles, weren't they, Papa?" asked Roger, when he had finished telling his exciting story.

"Eagles? H'm. I hardly think so," was the reply. "Eagles would build their nests in less accessible spots than the top of a tree so near the ground. Their nests are usually on mountain-sides. Still, it may be. It was a large brown bird, you say. Did you notice any particular spot or color about him?"

"I noticed a very pretty pattern on the under side of his wings," replied Roger. "A pattern in brown, on a whitish color, I think."

"Ah!" said his father. "I thought so. It is an osprey. Osprey is another name for fish-hawk, you know. This is a famous place for fish-hawks."

"You have made a good beginning, Roger," said his mother. "You will have an excellent

opportunity to study ospreys here on the island. They are to me the most interesting of birds. I love to watch them fly. They are wonderfully graceful. I have watched them by the hour together. They must have been terribly frightened when they saw you appear so suddenly near their nest. Do you blame them for chasing you away? I don't."

"They have but one mate for life, I have heard," said Mr. Gay. "If its mate dies the bird lives alone for the rest of its life. And they live to be very old."

"Noble, beautiful creatures," said Mrs. Gay, "I love them." She murmured under her breath a verse of a poem :

" 'Creatures of desolation, far they fly
Through distant lands bound by the curling foam.
In misty fens, wild moors and trackless sky
These wild things have their home.' "

CHAPTER VI

THE FISH-HAWK'S NEST

It was a fine afternoon for a sail. The sailboat, with Captain Grumpus at the helm, skipped gaily over the waves, leaping and lurching like a living thing. Roger was receiving his first lesson in sailing a boat. The captain was explaining the different parts of it, the names of the sails, and many other interesting things, which opened a new world to Roger.

Charley Rover, a strapping big fellow of about sixteen, with a keen, hawk-like face, brown and weather-beaten, was showing Jack around the boat. His little, bristly-haired yellow dog followed him wherever he went. He was greatly amused at Jack's questions, and burst into frequent peals of laughter. Jack was not satisfied until he had examined the boat from one end to the other. Everything was as neat as wax. One could "eat off the floor," as the saying

goes. Every coil of rope and other article that might be needed was in just the right spot, ready for immediate use. Jack was particularly delighted with the tiny cabin with its single bunk where one could pass a very comfortable night.

"It's the best boat of its size hereabouts," said Charley, "an' that's sayin' somethin', too. I can sail it just as well as Uncle can. One man can manage it alone all right, but it's easier with two aboard. We'll take yer deep sea fishin' some time if you're good sailors."

"I mean to have a yacht of my own some day," said Roger. "Just like this one, only smaller, perhaps. And I want to learn all about sailing; all there is to know."

"Thet's the only way," growled the captain. "Own yer own yacht 'n' know it from end ter end. Them dandies thet hev fancy yachts an' let somebody else sail 'em fer 'em. Pshaw!" The captain puffed vigorously in disgust.

"That is just what Bijah used to say about a horse," thought Roger.

"I suppose you know the Maine coast pretty well, Captain Grumpus," said Mrs. Gay.

"Huh, yes," he answered. "Why, I know every inch o' the coast from Cape Cod ter New-foundlan'. An' there ain't a rock nor a reef roun' this island thet I ain't be'n over—or on. Be'n sailin' a boat ever sence I was a little chap no bigger'n this 'ere. So kin Charley here. 'N' I tell you," he added impressively, "there's some mighty skittish places right nigh here! Yes, sir-ee!"

"You bet there are!" corroborated Charley.

"Oh, where are they?" asked the children.

Captain Grumpus pointed a strong, stubby finger out in the direction of a near-by island. A long, irregular reef extended for quite a distance between the boat and the island.

"D'ye see thet reef?" he asked. "Wall, it's low tide now, an' it sticks 'way out o' the water three or four feet. An' at high tide it's all covered up by the water. Ye kin sail right over it then, without the keel comin' nigh it, it's so deep down then. See? But at half tide ——"

The captain stopped and wagged his head impressively. Then he began again in a solemn voice, "At *half tide*, as I was a-sayin', them

rocks is jest below the surface o' the water! Ef a greenhorn tries ter go over 'em—*bump* he goes right on 'em! There goes a hole in the boat; it fills with water, an' down he goes ten fathoms, sir! See? So keep clear o' them rocks, even in a dory, unless tide's high. Don't take no resks!"

"Yes, yes! 'The Ledges.' I remember them," cried Mr. Gay. "Do not forget that, children."

"They've got a new name now," remarked the captain drily. "We calls 'em 'Smart's Ledges' now. Ye see, there was a rich city feller come down here. Tuk the green cottage in the village. Used ter be ole Jabez Farmer's place. Wall, he hed it painted up green with pink trimmin's. You know the place, don't ye? Looks mighty fine, some folks think. But ye couldn't git me ter sleep in sech a lookin' house! Not ef I was a yaller dog!"

The captain gave the tiller a jerk that sent a shower of spray over the bow.

"You are right. I would not sleep there either," agreed Mr. Gay. "But how about the ledges, Cap'n?"

“Wall, as I was a-sayin’,” resumed the storyteller, “this ’ere Charley Smart hed a yacht, an’ he thought he knew all about sailin’. An’ blamed ef he didn’t git on every rock in the harbor. The city folks hed a great joke. They’d promote him up fer every rock he’d git on. Fust he was bo’s’n, then cap’n, then commodore. Wall, as I was a-sayin’, Commodore Smart sailed over them ledges last summer. Tide was sorter half ’n’ half. Wall,—got nearly over—all of a sudden, *bump* went the boat, but didn’t hit very hard an’ on they went, thinkin’ they was all right. Now Charley Smart’s darter Effie hed be’n a-settin’ on the stern o’ the boat with her mandolin a-playin’ chunes as they sailed along. Wall, the commodore looks back, and wot do ye think he sees? There sets Effie on top o’ the water, mandolin an’ all—playin’, too, fer aught I know—but lookin’ quite surprised! She’d jounced off on ter the rock when they bumped on it, an’ there she set! Don’t know which was most surprised, she or her dad.”

As they passed beyond the rocky point, there,

on a high slope, just on the edge of the woods they saw a dead tree. On top of the tree was what looked like a mass of sticks. Roger pointed to it excitedly.

"There it is!" he cried. "I thought it was an eagle's nest, Captain Grumpus, but Papa says they are only fish-hawks. They looked big enough to be eagles. There they are now." And Roger told the story of his morning's adventure. The captain's steady eyes were fixed on the mass of rocks ahead of them. He nodded his head and grunted.

"Fish-hawks," he growled. "Thet's what we calls 'em. You ask Charley. He knows about 'em. He resked his life ter save a young un's life three year ago. Climbed down Bald Head Rock ter git it. Steep an' straight as a wall; bird was in a crevice o' rock with wing broken. But he got it an' took keer o' it till it was well."

"Oh, did you, Charley? How brave! Tell us about it!" cried the children.

"Why, 'tain't nothin' ter tell," cried Charley, blushing modestly under his coat of tan.

"Anybody'd 'a' done it. He tore me pretty bad, though. Tried ter fight me off. Thought I was goin' ter kill him. I hed ter hold him tight an' climb up the rock. Thet's all."

"And did you tame him?" asked Roger eagerly.

"Tame him? Tame a fish-hawk? Wall, I guess not," answered Charley. "Why, he was jest as wild when I let him go, when his wing was well, as he was when I got him. Nobody darst ter come nigh him. He grew big an' strong an' of course we let him go as soon as he could use his wing an' leg."

"I wish I could see one near," said Roger. "If I could only see them without their seeing me."

"Say, Uncle!" cried Charley, "what do yer say ter my takin' the little chap ter see the nest on Round Stone? Why can't I now?"

"Ye kin," grunted the captain. "But look sharp, mind. We'll cast anchor here an' ye can investigate it ef ye want ter."

"But is it safe, Cap'n?" inquired Mr. Gay. "Ospreys are pretty fierce, according to your

nephew Charley's account. And Roger found them so this morning."

"And—of course you would not harm the young ones or take the eggs?" inquired Mrs. Gay.

"Harm the young uns? Hurt the eggs? No, ma'am!" roared the captain.

"Oh, of course I knew you would not," hastily apologized Mrs. Gay.

"I won't hurt 'em," laughed Charley, as he jumped into the dory and took up the oars. "You want ter go too, Mr. Gay? All right. We'll have to hold on to our hats. Don't be skeered. I'll keep a sharp lookout an' see thet they don't hurt ye. Hi! See the old birds! Some birds is more fierce 'n others, ye know, like folks."

In a few minutes they were climbing carefully on to the slippery seaweed and making their way up the rocks toward the nest. It seemed risky. The old birds flew round and round their heads, shrieking angrily, poor things. Their babies were in the nest. But they did not offer to touch Mr. Gay and Roger. Perhaps

it was because Charley waved his arms and kept a sharp lookout. Or they may not have been as fierce as Roger's acquaintances of the morning. At last Roger stood on top of the rock and, leaning forward, was able actually to look into the nest. There lay two large birds, as big as turkeys, Roger thought. They were apparently dead. Not a feather moved.

"Why, they are dead!" exclaimed Roger, drawing back.

"Dead? Not a bit of it," said Charley, waving his arms wildly as one of the old birds swooped down perilously near Roger's head. "They're 'playin' 'possum,' thet's all; think we won't touch 'em if they play dead. That's a game all animals an' birds knows how ter play; even young uns like these. I'll give 'em a poke."

"But don't hurt them!" cried Roger quickly.

A few insinuating pokes with a stick made the birds realize that "playing 'possum" was of no use. With a great scrambling, scratching, and fluttering of wings, they got to their feet and stood erect, the very embodiment of fierce help-

lessness, their wild, untamed spirit shining from their eyes. They looked as though they wished to tear these impertinent intruders to pieces. Who could blame them? Was not this their home, built on a rock in the water, inaccessible, or almost so?

Another poke of the stick, and the birds spread their mighty wings. But though grown to full size they had not yet learned to fly. Roger held his breath. To be so near creatures like these. He had never dreamed of such a thing.

"Now I'll keep him quiet, an' you reach out and stroke him," said Roger's friend, suiting the action to the words. Roger hesitated.

"I'll see thet he don't touch ye. Now! Smooth his feathers! Don't be scared," repeated Charley. Roger did as he was bidden, and stroked the beautiful feathers. The fierce eyes grew fiercer, and a look came into them that Roger never forgot; a look of insulted dignity, of reproach. It was dreadful to see. The bird drew back, trembling; this immense creature that could have rent the boy with a

stroke of his powerful beak. Above their heads the old birds shrieked and cried wildly.

The three intruders left the nest and climbed down the slippery rocks. Roger dropped silently into the boat. Charley went to the oars. Mr. Gay wound the film of his camera.

"I have some capital pictures of the birds," he said. "I took half a dozen snaps. Some of them must be good."

CHAPTER VII

MRS. ROVER

MRS. ROVER had washed and put away the breakfast dishes, "tidied up" the kitchen and dining-room, and fried some delicious doughnuts. Then, her work at the Gay cottage finished until five o'clock, when she was to return to get dinner, she threw a shawl over her shoulders and started down the path toward her own "doll house," as Kathryn called it.

The Gays usually had their lunch on the piazza, served on a rustic table made of wood with the bark left on. It was always a very simple lunch, but how good it tasted out-of-doors in the fresh air! Of course they often took lunch on the rocks, or wherever their excursions found them at lunch time; on the one or two really warm days of the summer they had it under the big hemlock tree on the sloping meadow in front of the house where

there was always a breeze. The children made their own beds and kept the rooms in order. There was no dusting to do because there was no dust; so housekeeping in the "Delectable Isle" was really very simple and easy.

"We are going your way, Mrs. Rover," called the children. "We will walk along with you as far as your house if you would like to have us."

"Come in a minute, won't you?" said Mrs. Rover, pausing at the front door to train up a vine that had grown too fast. "Do come in. I don't have visitors very often nowadays. You haven't seen the inside of my house yet."

She opened the door and led the way into the cunningest little parlor you ever saw. It was so small that it looked just big enough for a doll to live in. It was cozy and pretty, with a bright colored rug on the floor, a table with a photograph album, a Bible, and several large books on it. There were comfortable rocking-chairs standing about and there were muslin curtains at the windows.

"This is a picture of my husband, who was

drowned at sea years ago," said Mrs. Rover, showing the children a picture of a splendid, stalwart young fellow. "Charley was a baby then. He looks like his father, folks say."

"Why, he looks exactly like him, Mrs. Rover, doesn't he?" said Kathryn.

"Except that he hasn't any beard," added Jack. "He's most as handsome, though."

"I am glad you think so," said Mrs. Rover, much pleased. "Mr. Rover—he was a captain, you know, Captain Billy Rover, they called him; well, he stood six foot two in his stockings. Charley's 'most six feet. Here's Charley's picture when he was a baby. Full o' mischief even then. He's a little reckless and hasty, but he's a good-hearted fellow; he's always been good to his mother, my Charley."

"Does Captain Grumpus live here, too?" asked Jack.

"Brother Garry? Oh, yes; but he's hardly ever here, any mor'n Charley is; they're most of the time in their fish houses, or on the water; I don't see much of 'em nowadays. See these things? They're swordfishes' swords. Aren't

they long and sharp? Go right through the side of a boat and rip it up in no time. Ever eat swordfish? It's very nice. See this big piece of coral. Isn't it beautiful? My son brought that home from one o' his voyages. My, he's got all kinds o' curiosities! You ask him to show 'em to you some time. An' Cap'n Garry, too. His fish house is just stuffed with all sorts o' things. Now I'll show you the kitchen."

Mrs. Rover led the way into a much larger room which was evidently used as kitchen, dining and living room. It was neat as wax. A shining range stood on one side. Two large, black cats rose from two chairs as they entered; stretched themselves, gazed at the children inquiringly with their inscrutable yellow eyes; then each leaped to the floor and they walked forward, side by side, waving their tails rhythmically.

"Ah, One Cat! Hello, Two Cat! Come to welcome the visitors, eh? That's right. Come and shake hands." Which they did, quite willingly.

"What are their names, Mrs. Rover?" asked Kathryn.

"Why, this one with the white tip on his tail we call One Cat," replied Mrs. Rover.

"One Cat! Why, what a funny ——" began Jack, then stopped politely, fearing to hurt his hostess's feelings.

"Do you mean that that is its name? *One Cat!*" asked Roger incredulously.

"Yes, that is his name," replied Mrs. Rover. "We couldn't seem to think of anything else to call him; got tired o' common names."

"And what is the other cat's name?" inquired Kathryn, stroking its silky fur.

"Why, his name is Two Cat. One Cat and Two Cat," answered Mrs. Rover in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Well, if I couldn't think of a better name to call a nice kitty like you, I would give up!" whispered Jack as he hugged the two poor cats who had to endure names that were no names at all.

"These are my fish nets," went on Mrs. Rover, going over to a corner and showing the

children some beautifully made nets. A stand, nearly as high as Jack's head, held various sizes of wooden needles, over which twine was wound.

"Oh, show us how you make nets, please!" exclaimed Kathryn. "Is it very hard to do?"

"No indeed. It is very easy when you once learn," said Mrs. Rover, sitting down in the chair and taking up the needle. The half-completed net hung from one corner of the stand. With a deft motion of the hand, the fisherman's wife threw the cord over, drew it tight over the "mash board," as she called it; knotted it firmly; then over again, back, knot, quick as a wink, making the mesh of the net.

"What do you have so many different sizes of needles for?" asked Jack, looking curiously at the odd shaped things.

"Those are for the different sizes of net," answered Mrs. Rover. "Brother Garry whittled 'em for me. See, this coarse twine is called 'seine twine'; that is for the big, strong nets. People make hammocks of that size. I'll show you how to make one some time, but it is hard

on your hands till you get used to it. This fine twine is called 'dip net twine.' There are several different sizes. These little ones make pretty butterfly nets."

"I should like to learn how to make a hammock, Mrs. Rover," said Kathryn.

"I will teach you," was the answer. "Come down some rainy day when you cannot stay out-of-doors. You will soon learn. But you had better wear an old pair of gloves to protect those soft little hands, dear."

Roger stood looking at the model of a full rigged ship, about three feet long, that was fastened to the wall.

"That ship is a beauty," said Roger. "My! Everything is there, anchor, ropes and all. And there is the name painted on it, just as they have it on big boats, 'Hannah Dearing.'"

"Brother Garry made that boat years ago, when he was only a lad," said Mrs. Rover, standing beside the children and looking at the boat. "It is a beauty, isn't it? It took him months and months to make it. Every bit of it is finished and made just as careful as if it

was a-goin' to sea. Not a thing left out that would go in a fishin' vessel. It was a model of the one he hoped to be captain of some day. I remember how proud he was of it. But the girl he made it for died just about the time he finished it."

"Was her name Hannah Dearing?" asked Kathryn softly.

"Yes; she was Hannah Dearing; as sweet a girl as ever drew breath. My brother never got over it, though he never said a word. Jest shut his lips together and hung the boat up there on the wall; it's never been took down. An' he seemed to lose his ambition after that. Never cared to be captain of a vessel. He would have been, though, if she'd lived."

"Poor Cap'n Garry!" said Roger.

"Poor Cap'n Garry!" said Kathryn and Jack. They stood silent, looking at the boat.

"He's lonesome sometimes, I know," went on Mrs. Rover. "He's gruff an' crusty, but you mustn't mind that. He likes young folks, an' has taken a shine to you-all. Ask him to show you the fiddle he carved with his jack-knife.

He can play on it, too. He'll show it if he's in the mood. If he isn't—well, I guess you'll know it if he isn't. He'd like to be cheered up sometimes."

"Let's go and find him now," said Roger.

The three children bade good-bye to their hostess at the end of the tiny plank walk that led to the side door. A lovely flower garden stretched beside it, full of old-fashioned blossoms. Nasturtiums twined and shone over the low wicket fence.

"Help yourselves to all the flowers you want, any time," said Mrs. Rover. "Just come right in an' take all you want without askin'. It does 'em good to pick 'em, you know."

The fisherman's widow made a very quaint picture as she waved good-bye to them, standing by the masses of brilliant flowers in her neat gray dress and white apron.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOG COMES IN

CAPTAIN GRUMPUS was not in his fish house. But near by on the beach the children found him cleaning fish. He had on his rubber apron and was standing before a sort of wooden table with a rim around the top, busily at work. A basket of fish, and various kegs and barrels stood near. He did not turn when the children approached, but kept on with his work.

"Good-morning, Captain," said Roger.

"Mornin'," answered the surly captain.

"Are you busy, Cap'n?" inquired Jack.

"Yep," was the answer. "Don't I look it?"

"You are cleaning fish, aren't you?" said Kathryn.

"Yep. Cleanin' fish," was the answer.

"What a lot you have got!" said Jack.

"You are not going to eat it all yourself, are you?"

"Some I dries, some I eats, some I pickles, an' some I takes to cannin' factory," replied the captain.

"I'd like to go fishing with you some time, Cap'n," said Roger. "You said I might, you know."

"How'd ye all like ter go squiddin' some evenin'?" inquired the captain suddenly. "Ever see a squid?"

"Why, no. I never saw one, but we read about one last winter," answered Roger. "Papa read 'Toilers of the Sea' aloud. That told about a squid. It is the same as a cuttlefish, isn't it?"

Kathryn and Jack shuddered. They thought of the monster which had caught the bather Gileat in its terrible grasp, and had wound its long feelers about him and begun to draw his life out — Oh, it was too awful!

"I did not know squids grew around here," said Kathryn, faintly.

"Are there many of them?" asked Jack.

"Many? Why, the water's full of 'em!" replied their friend, turning to stare at them. "Don't ye want ter go squiddin'?"

The children stood speechless. So these dreadful creatures lived in the waters around the "Delectable Isle"! They had intended to go in bathing that afternoon. Kathryn thought of the pink grotto where she had sat when the tide came in. Perhaps it was the abode of one of these creatures. None of the children would ever dare to climb about among the rocks again at low tide. They shuddered to think of it.

"We go squiddin' at night," went on the unsuspecting captain. "Hev ter take lamps ter see by an' ter attract 'em. Then we ketches 'em an' brings 'em home. It's kinder fun."

This was worse still! To go out at night to catch these creatures! The children remembered seeing a picture of a giant cuttlefish in the act of crushing a boat, fisherman and all, in its horrible, slimy grasp. Its eyes, in the picture, were nearly as big as the man's head.

Captain Grampus turned again and stared at the children.

"Wall, I gum it!" he declared. "Don't ye want ter go? Not scared ter go at night, be ye?"

"But aren't they very fierce?" asked Kathryn timidly at last.

"Fierce?" inquired the captain. "Fierce!" he repeated incredulously.

"We thought they were dangerous," said Jack.

"Dangerous!" shouted the captain. "Dangerous! Squids dangerous!"

The captain threw back his head and shouted with laughter. Roger winced. He did not want to be thought a coward. But a cuttlefish seemed about the most terrible creature that he had ever heard of. No, he would not go fishing for cuttlefish!

"Wall, I thought ye had more sand than ter be scared ter go squiddin'!" laughed the captain, scornfully. "Why, how big did ye think they was, hey?"

"The one in the picture was bigger than a man," said Roger.

"And it had long arms, six or seven of them, as long as a man," said Jack.

"And its eyes were as big as the man's head," added Kathryn.

"It crushed the boat to pieces like an egg-

shell," said Roger. "How big are the biggest ones you have seen, Cap'n?"

The children held their breaths and waited. Captain Grampus smiled.

"About ten inches long!" he answered.

After the children had recovered from their surprise at this announcement, they were eager to go squidding with the captain.

"How soon can we go?" asked Roger.

"Can't we go this evening?" asked Jack.

Captain Grampus pointed out over the water. A dark shadow spread over the horizon line, shutting out the Camden Hills completely.

"Do ye see thet?" inquired the captain. "Thet's a fog bank. An' it's a-comin' up fast. Fogs come up fast hereabouts. It's these 'ere fogs thet fishermen hates worse'n storms. Shet out everythin' in two minutes! an' ye can't see a foot in front o' yer nose. Watch it come."

The fog bank was spreading with incredible rapidity. Already it had covered half the sky. The nearest point of rocks was blotted out. The sun suddenly disappeared. The children felt a cool dampness on their faces.

"Time fer you kids ter cut fer home," said Captain Grampus. "In five minutes the fog'll be so thick ye can cut it with a knife, an' ye can't see a yard from the house. Run, now, or ye'll git lost! So long!"

The children did not need to be urged to follow this advice. They had hardly left the beach when the fish house, the captain and the beach itself had disappeared. Mrs. Rover's tiny house seemed unreal. They raced along the grassy path and up to the house, chased by the soft whiteness that swept along beside them and settled down chokingly. No wonder the fishermen dreaded the fog!

The captain was right. In five minutes they could not see a yard beyond the piazza!

Squidding turned out to be a very different kind of sport from what the children's imaginations had at first conjured up. They found that Maine squids are reproductions in miniature of the South Sea cuttlefish, small, soft-bodied creatures, with long arms that were constantly moving.

After it was all over, and they had tumbled



“ RUN NOW, OR YE’LL GET LOST ”

into bed, tired and sleepy after the unusual excitement of going out "after dark," they found that they had a rather confused remembrance of creaking oars, black darkness, Captain Grampus's hoarse whispers coming out of the dusk; of the light of a lantern shining close to the water; of the light shining on the captain's arm as he drew up the net full of squids that were to be used for bait; of creaking oars again; and finally of standing in the captain's fish house watching the small things wriggling in a basin of water. The captain showed them a few of the funny little creatures at a time; how unlike to the horrible, fierce monsters of warmer waters! It was wonderful to see them change color every moment. Their chief protection seemed to be the black ink which they discharged at the approach of an enemy. It was very curious to the children to see the water around them become suddenly black, thus hiding them completely from sight.

"Talk o' bein' invisible!" remarked the captain. "Thet's mighty nigh it, I take it. Nobody ain't got eyes sharp 'nough to see them

critturs in thet ink. It's real ink, too, ye know. Folks down here mixes it with water or some-thin' an' they uses it all the time. Good's any ink."

After that the children went stumbling home by the light of their father's lantern, which swung to and fro weirdly. There were fireflies darting around them. They felt like fireflies themselves, lighting up the blackness of the night with their waving lantern.

Then to bed, where Kathryn dreamed that she was pursued by a giant cuttlefish which drew near, reached out and threw a net over her head. But Kathryn called upon the fairies who turned her into a firefly, so she escaped through the meshes of the net!

CHAPTER IX

NEW ARRIVALS

LITTLE Ann Farthingale arrived a week later at the island. Her aunt had found it impossible to come, for did not every sick person in Merryton depend on her? And was she not the mainstay of every one in trouble or needing help or advice on any subject? But Miss Farthingale was more pleased to have Ann go than to go herself.

It was a fortunate thing that the Jamison boys and their father had been visiting in Merryton, and were going to the island themselves for the summer. Mrs. Jamison and Baby Clare were already there. So Mr. Jamison and the boys escorted Ann on the long journey to the island, which she would never have been able to take alone.

It was Ann's first trip away from home alone. She had never been but a few miles from Merry-

ton in her life. She had never seen the sea, of course. The Jamison boys declared afterward that it had been "as good as a circus" to watch her. Her big brown eyes had grown bigger and bigger with taking in so many interesting sights. The trip on the water had been a wonderful experience. By the time she reached the "Delectable Isle" little Ann looked for all the world like a tiny exclamation point. But she was so tired and sleepy that she was put straight to bed in the little bed next to Kathryn's in the pink and white bedroom that looked out over the water.

As soon as breakfast was over the next morning Herbert and Ralph came over; and what a commotion and excitement there was then! The children had not seen one another for a whole year, and many exciting things had happened during that time that had to be talked over.

"Let's take Ann down and show her the beach. She hasn't seen a beach before," said Roger.

So they all raced down to the beach. The tide was coming in. Great rollers came racing

up over the smooth sand like wild horses with flying white manes; flung themselves upon the sand with a roar; then retreated noiselessly and came on again for a fresh attack, higher than before.

Ann gasped and stood still. This was the strangest thing that she had yet seen. Then she went wild and tore up and down the sand; chased the waves and then ran screaming from them; she stooped and felt of the hard, moist sand that was so different from anything that she had seen before. The other children laughed to see her.

"I told you it would be a circus to watch her," said Herbert.

Then they all went in wading and frolicked and played in the sand. Herbert and Roger dug wonderful, deep wells in the sand and Ann was astonished to see the water come pouring into them from below. Herbert made a fort with a moat around it and a drawbridge. Then he dug a long canal that led down toward the water. How Ann laughed with delight to see the water run up and come pouring into the canal, then into the moat and round the castle.

After a while they all went back to the house where they found Mr. and Mrs. Jamison and Baby Clare on the piazza. Baby Clare was the little sister that the boys had so longed for. She was the chubbiest, rosiest, dearest little girl that the children had ever seen. Every one wanted to hold her at the same time. She was in great danger of being spoiled by her two big brothers. But the attention she received did not seem to trouble her at all. She smiled upon them all quite impartially, and behaved much like a tiny queen among her subjects.

Then Mr. Jamison come strolling up with the bird boxes under his arm. He and the boys had found it quite easy to make them, and they were very proud of their success. Roger brought a ladder, and the entire party went out to select the places to put them. After much discussion, the big hemlock in front of Roger's window was selected as a proper place for one box, and a tree back of the house, in sight of the piazza, for the other. Mr. Gay climbed the ladder and hung them securely to the tree.

“We ought to have a ‘To Let’ sign to show

the birds that the houses are ready to be occupied," said Herbert.

"Of course!" agreed Mr. Gay from the top of the ladder.

So Herbert and Roger wrote out a sign and Mr. Gay fastened it to the tree underneath the box. It read :

To Let—For the Summer

"Real estate will be at a premium now, I expect," said Mr. Gay as he descended the ladder. "And nest-making, I am afraid, will become a lost art." After that they all had lunch on the piazza.

"Let's rig up a series of signals," said Herbert. "The kind they have on big vessels, you know. They have flags, and each color means something. Let's make out a 'code table' and then we can talk to each other that way. It would be easier than to rig a telephone."

"We can have the upper piazza of our houses for the signal stations," cried Roger. "Come on, let's hunt up flags."

A curious assortment of garments was gathered

together from the two houses and thrown in a heap ready to be selected to serve as flags.

"I can't find any pink to match your pink calico except this silk sweater of Mama's," said Roger, emerging from his mother's closet with her new silk sweater on his arm. "I guess it will do, though."

"That will do," said Herbert wisely. "Your mother won't mind your taking it. She won't wear silk sweaters much down here. They're too 'dressed up.' Besides, we shan't use pink much, anyhow. Pink stands for 'Sunday'; we don't often do things on Sunday."

"We'll have to take the baby's blue sack if we can't find any other blue," said Ralph. "There was a blue silk dress of Mother's, but that had white spots on it; it was too long for a flag, besides. And Father's blue shirt had white stripes. We couldn't spare our sailor suits, and the blue serge suits and jackets are too dark."

"The blue sack will have to do," declared Herbert, flinging it down on the pile which included a pair of black trousers of Mr. Jamison, a black skirt of Mrs. Gay; Kathryn's red sweater;

a crimson sash, green silk stockings belonging to Mr. Gay, a brown table-cloth, and scarfs, curtains, petticoats and other useful articles of different colors which disappeared mysteriously from the two houses and were not missed for some time.

That very afternoon a pair of green pajamas (Mr. Gay's special joy and pride) was seen waving proudly from the Gay signal station. The Jamison boys knew, without consulting their code table, that green color stood for "sail." Soon after Roger and Jack, watching anxiously from the upper piazza, perceived a white pennon (a bath towel) appear and wave vigorously from the Jamison station.

"Hurrah! White means 'yes'! They are coming!" shouted Roger and Jack, tumbling down-stairs to announce to the rest of the family that the Jamisons could go with them for a sail that afternoon. Every one knew it already, and that they were to start at two o'clock, but that did not matter. The signal officers were delighted with the success of their scheme.

At two o'clock that afternoon a party of

sweater-clad Gays, with little Ann in their midst, gathered on the beach. They had extra wraps and a voluminous lunch basket. They were soon joined by Mr. and Mrs. Jamison, the two boys and—yes! the baby, too. The Jamisons wore sweaters and were armed, like themselves, with wraps and a lunch basket. Baby Clare had never been sailing before. She sat crowing happily on her mother's arm while her father carried some of the wraps and the lunch basket; which last, he declared, was much heavier than the baby.

The tide was high. It was a very jolly party that climbed from the chair, which Captain Grumpus had placed on the beach, into the bow of the boat, which on account of the high tide had been able to come right up to the beach. Charley Rover was busy with the sail. Captain Grumpus stood ready to pull each one up safely from the chair, that shook and tipped backward or forward in a terrifying manner. Mr. Jamison's turn came the next to the last. He was a stout man. Having climbed laboriously on to the long-suffering chair he was about to hoist

himself into the bow when the chair tilted forward suddenly, leaving Mr. Jamison hanging in mid-air, his hands in the boat and his feet entangled in the rungs of the chair.

“Avast there! Steady! Cast anchor! Here ye be. My, ye’re a good ketch!” cried the captain as he hoisted the heavy load on board, with much snorting, puffing and kicking, and some vigorous shoving from behind by Mr. Gay.

“You certainly caught a whale that time,” laughed Mr. Jamison, mopping his face which was red from his exertions.

“All aboard!” cried the captain; and a moment later the boat glided away from the beach.

CHAPTER X

"FAT MAN'S ISLAND"

"WHERE ye goin' ter-day?" inquired Captain Grumpus in a hoarse growl, glaring fiercely about at the assembled passengers and fixing his eye upon little Ann. That young lady, not being acquainted with the captain's ways, was horribly frightened, and hid behind Mrs. Gay's skirts from which she peeped forth like a little wild bird. But it was not long before she emerged; and she and the captain became fast friends.

"You have a big, lively crew to handle to-day, Cap'n," said Mr. Gay. "We should like to see the rapids at the eastern end of the island. And on the way back we might investigate 'Pickle' Island."

"Pickle? The idea of calling an island by such a name!" exclaimed Kathryn.

"Let's give it a better one," suggested Herbert.

"Yes, let's," agreed Roger.

"But we ought to wait until we see it before we shall know what to call it," said Ralph, very sensibly.

"Why was it called 'Pickle,' Cap'n?" inquired Jack.

"Wall," replied the captain slowly, with a familiar twinkle in the eye that the children had come to know so well, "I reckon it's because there ain't no pickles ter be hed fer three mile. Ain't thet the reason most things is named? Never knew a 'Sea View House' thet hed a sign o' a view. An' 'Oak Ridge' is always pines, an' so on. Ain't thet so?"

"It is nearly always so, I do believe," laughed Mrs. Gay.

The children sat in a row on the edge of the boat with their feet hanging over the edge. The water was very smooth, so it was safe to do this. Some one had brought some pilot biscuit, which is delicious when dipped in sea water. Charley Rover leaned over the side of the boat with a

biscuit in his hand, and when the boat lurched dipped it in quickly and passed it "along the line." Several times he seemed about to fall in, but he recovered himself just in time, laughing heartily at the children's screams. His little yellow dog never left his master's side for a moment. He tried to eat every biscuit before Charley had a chance to dip it in the water; but his master was too quick for him.

"What is your dog's name, Charley?" asked Herbert.

"Guess," replied Charley.

"Why, I can't guess," answered Herbert.

"Well, let's see, I guess it's Rover."

Charley grinned and shook his head.

The children all tried to guess the name of the dog. They tried every name that they could think of. At last they gave it up.

"We can't guess his name. Tell us, Charley," said Roger at last.

"I told ye," answered Charley, grinning more than ever.

"When did you tell us? Come, you're joking! Tell us, Charley!" cried Herbert.

"But I did tell ye!" persisted Charley. "You asked me what was his name. I said Guess, didn't I? Wall, that's his name."

"What's his name? What do you mean? What is his name?" they asked, still puzzled.

"Guess," grinned Charley provokingly.

"Come, now!" cried Herbert, angrily. "You haven't told us his name yet."

"Yes, I have," persisted Charley. "Ye won't believe me, that's all."

"Ha! Ha! I see the joke!" laughed Roger. "His name is Guess, isn't it?"

"Wall, didn't I say so?" said Charley, greatly enjoying the joke. "Folks never believes me when I says his name's 'Guess.' But it is. Folks is slow, ain't they, Guess?"

The yellow dog wagged his tail and showed his teeth in a broad smile.

"My nevvvy kin swim like a fish," said the captain, proudly. "I ain't never learned. None o' the folks down here ever swam till the summer folks come here. Charley went in swimmin' with them."

"This boat is named for you, Charley, isn't

it?" said Roger. "It has 'Sea Rover' on the bow."

"Yep. That's Uncle Garry's joke," replied Charley. "He named it for me. He says it'll be mine some day. It's the 'Sea Rover.' C. Rover. See?"

"Oh! Ha! Ha! That is a good joke, Cap'n Grumpus!" every one cried.

"Not a bad un," agreed the captain, puffing at his pipe.

The "Sea Rover" danced and leaped over the waves. Charley Rover pulled some rope from his pocket and showed the boys how to tie all sorts of "sailor's knots." They passed several small islands. Flocks of sea-gulls flew up at their approach, then settled down again as soon as they had passed. Before long they came to a rocky point. Between this point and the other island they caught sight of the rapids.

"Thet's Arrow Point. Don't it look like an arrow? An' them's rapids as is rapids," remarked the captain as they drew near.

Soon they were standing on the rocks, worn

smooth by the water, beside which the mighty current swirled and leaped. A stick went bounding past them, was caught for a moment, then on it went in the fierce current.

"I've seen seals leap them rapids," said the captain. "They frolic an' play in the water jest like childern. Many a time I've watched 'em shoot the rapids, one after another, jest for fun ; leapin' an' jumpin' outer the water, an' barkin', too. The Indians used ter shoot these rapids in their canoes."

"Oh, wouldn't I like to do it!" cried Herbert.

"So would I!" said Roger. "Have you ever done it, Cap'n?"

"Hunderds o' times," answered the captain. "We could ha' shot 'em to-day, in the boat, ef the tide hed be'n right. P'raps we'll do it some time. But don't you go an' try it, young fellers! Ye've got ter know jest how ter do it, ye know. Don't ye go tryin' it in a dory."

"No, boys. We can trust you not to try any such funny business, I am sure," said Mr. Gay. "If we could not trust you there would not be any pleasure in going to a place like this, where

there are a thousand dangers for foolhardy simpletons."

"Ye're right there," said the captain. "These 'ere rusticators an' landlubbers—'scuse me, but they be, ye know,—they takes resks an' tries ter do things thet an ole seaman knows from 'sperance ain't ter be done. An' they pays fer it every time."

"'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,'" quoted Mrs. Jamison.

"Something tells me that it is near feed time," remarked Herbert, who was anxious to change the conversation.

The smooth, flat rocks made an ideal table. Every one sat down immediately. They were all ravenously hungry. Mrs. Gay and Mrs. Jamison spread out the lunch temptingly, and then they all set to work to demolish it. In an extraordinarily short time not a crumb remained.

The tide was coming in fast as they left the rapids and passed along toward the shore, which had once been the happy camping grounds of the Indians. Little Ann whispered in Kath-

ryn's ear, "I never, never had such a good time! What fun picnics are! Oh, isn't it wonderful?"

Every one settled himself comfortably in the boat. Baby Clare went sweetly to sleep, wrapped in a nest made of rug. The waves lapped and leaped rhythmically, now and then splashing over the bow. It was rougher than when they had started.

"I suppose you can tell pretty nearly what time it is by the sun, Cap'n Garry," said Mr. Jamison. "And by the way, my watch is still set according to city time. There is half an hour's difference between that and the time here, they say."

"Yep. Ye're right," answered the captain. "Dude time's half an hour earlier—no, later,—than Rube time."

"Ah! I see. So I suspected," replied Mr. Jamison. "Dude time and Rube time. Excellent."

"There's more ways'n one o' tellin' time," remarked the captain, his eyes fixed on the distant horizon line toward which they seemed to be

making good time. "Watches an' clocks ain't always necessary."

"Oh, show us how, Captain Grampus!" cried the children, crowding around him.

"Easy 'nough when ye know how," said the captain.

"Show us, please,—please!" they begged.

"Real easy," smiled the captain blandly, looking tantalizingly at the children.

"Please show us!" came five imploring voices. The grown-ups were waiting expectantly, too. The captain relented.

"Wall," he began slowly, "take yer two hands an' stick 'em up sidewise;—no, sidewise, palms facin' yer, thumbs up, fingers pointed ter th' side.—Thet's right. Now—start with the left hand at the horizon line an' count up from the horizon, see? Left hand, right hand on top of thet, then left till ye reach the sun. Count, now, Roger."

"One,—two,—three,—four, and a little over," said Roger, measuring carefully, laying the edge of one hand close to the other and "walking up."

"Four an' a little over, eh?" repeated the captain. "Wall, now, what time does the sun set? 'Bout seven, ain't it? Yes."

"Seven five," said Mrs. Gay. "I looked at the 'Farmers' Almanac' this morning to see."

"Thet's right. We'll call it seven. Thet's nigh 'nough. Wall,—then the number o' hands' width 'tween the sun an' the horizon 'll give the number of hours afore sunset. Try an' see, now."

"Four from seven leaves three. It ought to be three o'clock, then," said Herbert, taking out his watch. "Three ten, mine says."

Various watches of different sizes and shapes were produced, the last one being a huge "turnip" of Captain Grampus. They all said somewhere between three and a quarter past.

"Thet's nigh as ye c'n expect to git," said the captain. "Ye don't need ter git no nigher. Thet'll do, won't it?"

"I should say so!" cried the children, measuring over and over again, and experimenting in different ways.

"That is a good thing to know, children,"

said Mr. Gay. "Who knows? We may be cast away on a desert island some day, and want to know when to dress for dinner. How did you learn that trick, Cap'n? It is a good one."

"Dunno," answered the captain. "Allers knowed it, I guess. I've tried it a good many times, too. It allers wucks fust rate."

"What else do you know, Cap'n?" inquired Jack, climbing up and sitting beside him. The captain surrendered the rudder to him, but kept a sharp watch, and now and then gave the rudder a helping touch. He smiled drily at Jack's question.

"Wall, I reckon I know a thing or two mor'n thet," he said. "I know a thing or two 'bout the winds an' the tides, an' the weather, an' fish an' boats, an' lobster pots, an' cookin'! There ain't nobody can make a better fish chowder nor I kin."

"Tell us something else, please," said Jack.

"Wall, I'll show yer how ter tell the p'int o' the compass by a watch. Guess ye don't know thet, eh?"

"Oh, no, we don't," they all chorused.

“Wall, then, out with yer watches. Them thet ain’t got ’em can look at somebody else’s. Ye kin look at mine here, Jacky. Ralph, too. All right. Now look sharp and pay ’tention. Twelve o’clock on a watch stands, roughly speakin’, for the south. See? Wall, now. P’int the short hand, the hour hand, ye know, at the sun. Now, just imagine there’s a line like another hand half-way between the hour hand and the twelve o’clock mark. Get thet? Well, where thet there line p’int off toward the horizon—thet’s south. See?”

This was quite a problem. Watches were now turned and twisted until the hour hands pointed at the sun. Then hands began to stretch out and fingers to point toward the south, at first doubtfully, then triumphantly.

“Why, you are right! It is south!” exclaimed Mr. Gay. “That is a capital thing to know. Do you understand, children?”

It took some time and experimenting before the children could really see this; then they declared it to be “easy as pie.”

“At noon the sun would be right overhead.

Then the two hands would be together. How do you make it out then, Captain?" asked Herbert. "Ha! Ha!" he laughed triumphantly. "I've caught you there, Cap'n!"

Captain Grampus squinted at the sun; then he turned slowly and surveyed the impertinent young rascal who had made this suggestion.

"See here, young feller, don't be too smart fer ole Cap'n Garry," he growled. "Why, who wants ter tell the p'int's o' the compass at noon? Thet's time ter be thinkin' o' eatin'. Folks is too hungry ter think o' sech things then."

"And what would you do if it was cloudy, and there wasn't any sun?" asked Roger.

Captain Grampus scratched his head and thought a minute.

"In cloudy weather stay ter hum!" he cried at length. "Thet's the place fer land lubbers thet asks too many questions. Now I ain't a-goin' ter tell yer any more. Ef ye don't keer ter believe what ole Cap'n Garry says, why ye kin go without. Here we be at 'Pickle.'"

The "Sea Rover" drew near the little wooded island and dropped anchor. Captain Grampus,

Mrs. Jamison and the baby decided to remain on board while the others landed on their tour of investigation.

With a wave of the hand to the people left on board the yacht, they walked up the pebbly beach, through a grassy meadow and then entered the woods.

"Why, here are fir trees!" exclaimed Mrs. Gay. "Balsam firs, and double ones, too. There is not a balsam tree on our island, so far as I know. Oh, I must get some fir to fill my pillows!"

"We will help you, Mrs. Gay," volunteered Ralph. "But what shall we put it in?"

Mrs. Gay looked about helplessly. There was not a bag, basket or anything in which to hold the fir branches. It looked as though she must give up trying to get them. But Mrs. Gay was a woman of resources. She looked thoughtful for a moment, and then she laughed. That was always a signal that she had found a way out of her difficulty, which she always did.

"There is just one thing to do," she said. "We can fill our sweaters."

So saying, she forthwith set to work and began to pick off the fragrant fir tips and to stuff them into her sweater. The others followed her example, and for a few minutes they all worked busily.

"Pick from the lower branches that are behind the others," said Mrs. Gay. "Then we shall not spoil the trees."

By and by Herbert turned about to speak to Roger, who was seated cross-legged on the ground, working busily. A shriek of laughter from Herbert drew Roger's attention to Herbert's appearance. One look, and Roger fell backward with an answering shriek.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Gay, stepping from behind a tree and looking anxiously at the boys. "Are you —— Oh! Ha! Ha!" He had doubled up with laughter at sight of the boys.

Mr. Gay's appearance was calculated to upset the gravity of anything. Naturally a tall, wiry figure, he had turned into a "Globe Fat Man." His long neck looked impossible, sticking out of the top of a fat gray sweater. While the

three strange objects stared at each other, shaking and howling with laughter, more figures appeared, one by one, each funnier than the last, each in turn greeted with a fresh roar from the others.

Ralph and Jack looked, in their red sweaters, like "Tweedledum and Tweedledee." Mrs. Gay's slender, graceful figure had disappeared beneath strange lumps and bunches. She looked like a funny white animal of an entirely new species. Kathryn and Ann were bursting from their blue sweaters; but as for Mr. Jamison, he looked like a feather bed; and a very badly made one at that. There they all stood howling at one another, for all the world like a circus show.

It was impossible to work any more. Mrs. Gay sat down on a stump to wipe the tears from her eyes; and as she sat there she looked so strange that the others laughed louder than ever.

"It is no use. We may as well go," gasped Mrs. Gay, wiping her eyes again. "Oh—oh, Jacky has got his *sleeves* stuffed!—John, if you

could see yourself!—Mr. J—— Oh, I shall die laughing, I know!” And she buried her face in her hands.

“It would be sad if we all died laughing here,” remarked Mr. Gay, trying to arrange his “stoutness” more artistically and making it more impossible than ever. “Our friends would never recognize us.”

“We might perish like the ‘Babes in the Woods,’ ” said Mr. Jamison, pushing a large lump round toward his back, and trying to look at it.

“No self-respecting bird would bury us, I am sure of that,” answered Mr. Gay. “Come, let us walk in a solemn procession, Indian file, and stand in a row in the boat. If we do not create a sensation then we never shall.”

You may imagine that they did create a sensation, which lasted during the sail home, right over the top of “Carter’s Reefs.”

The name had been found to take the place of “Pickle.” The island was from that time on “Fat Man’s Island.”

CHAPTER XI

ANN AND KATHRYN

ROGER and Jack were out in the rowboat with the Jamison boys. Mr. Gay was in the "studio," writing; Mrs. Gay had gone to find the sweet grass that she was sure grew somewhere on the marsh near by; she would find it, too; she always did find what she determined to find. So Kathryn and Ann were left to their own devices. The hours were precious. There were so many things to do! It was really difficult to choose.

On the fence rail near the house a row of baby swallows sat. They looked so comical, teetering back and forth as if afraid they might fall over backward. They acted exactly like babies learning to walk. There was a long row of them, twenty perhaps. The old bird sat on the fence post. Suddenly she would fly off, up

and around, then back again, as if to show the young birds all the proper "steps," as a dancing master does. One by one the babies would follow her example. It was very amusing to watch them. But they were hungry and demanded food constantly. How wide their mouths opened when the old bird returned with food for them! There were several families. Kathryn and Ann wondered how the birds told their babies apart, and how they remembered which yawning mouth had been fed last. But the old birds never made a mistake. Kathryn and Ann kept watch and not once did the wrong baby get fed when it was another's turn. At last away they all flew.

The bird basin was well patronized. In fact, there was a constant "waiting list." As soon as one bird had bathed, drank, and preened himself to his heart's content, another would hasten to take his place. How cunning the dear little fellows were! The bird houses were not yet occupied. One reason, perhaps, was that the boys were continually looking into the houses to see if they were taken yet. Of course

they wanted to take the "To LET" sign down as soon as the house was occupied. Now no sensible bird would be likely to move into a house that was watched as closely as that. Besides, it was late in the season to start house-keeping.

Charley Rover came whistling along and met the two little girls as they were walking down the path. Guess ran barking toward them.

"Hello!" said Charley, stopping and reaching a hand into each of the big pockets of his jacket. "I got somethin' for you. Where the—— Oh, here they be. There's one for each o' ye."

Charley drew out two lovely pieces of pink coral. Then out came two skates' eggs, and two "sand dollars." Kathryn and Ann were delighted. They had never seen anything like them before.

"I'll keep an eye out an' git ye some more things," said Charley. "I'm goin' over ter 'Pickle'—no, 'Fat Man's'—Island t'-day ter ketch sheep. We're goin' ter have a shearin'."

"Oh, I would like to see you shear sheep, Charley," said Kathryn.

"Wall, ain't ye never seen a sheep sheared?" asked Charley in surprise.

Kathryn shook her head.

"Wall, I'll take ye-all over ter Cap'n Bass' place an' show yer," said Charley. "I'll let ye know. But we'll hev ter ketch the sheep fust. Come, Guess."

Charley thrust his hands into his pockets again and sauntered whistling down the road as though he had nothing in the world to do and time was no possible object.

The tide was high. It was impossible to get into the Mermaid's Cave. They could look down toward it from a projecting cliff a little way to one side of it. Every wave dashed into the cave and filled it from end to end. How the water roared and reverberated back and forth from its sides. How could those tender little sea anemones stand such an onslaught? The force of the water was gradually wearing away the rocks along the shore, and yet there grew those delicate little flower-animals that a rough

touch of the hand would destroy. They grew directly in the path of the waves. It was a wonderful mystery.

The meadow above the cliff was a favorite spot to Kathryn and Ann. It was full of fascinating places to play in. The woods beyond were the home of fairies and dwarfs, Kathryn knew. There were fairy rings, and strange mushrooms that looked as though they turned every night into living fairy beings. Mrs. Gay had called this wood "Gnomewold." The name suited it exactly.

Kathryn and Ann were looking for four leaf clovers. The meadow was a famous place for them. Kathryn had found one. She held it in her hand and was bending to look for more. Suddenly she cried out :

"Oh, dear! I have dropped my four leaf clover!"

"Be sure to find it again," said Ann. "It is bad luck to lose a four leaf clover, you know. The fairies will punish you."

Kathryn knew that she had the moment before held the clover in her hand. She had felt

it slip from her fingers as she stood there. It must lie at her feet.

"Dear fairies, return my clover!" she cried, stooping to look carefully in the tall grass at her feet. Ah, there it was! She reached out her hand to pick it up. Then she saw that it was not the one that she had dropped. It was growing!

"Oh, Ann! Come and look!" exclaimed Kathryn. "The fairies have put another clover here for me. See what a beautiful one it is. It is ever so much nicer than the one I lost."

Ann examined the clover.

"It is too pretty to be just an ordinary one," she agreed. "It must be a fairy one. But you must find the other one now."

"It must be right here," said Kathryn. "I felt it slip through my fingers right in this spot."

But though the two little girls searched long and carefully, not a trace could they find of the four leaf clover that Kathryn had dropped!

"The fairies decided to give you a better one because you showed that you believed in them,"

said Ann, wisely. "I am sure it was a sign, anyway."

After that, nothing would convince Kathryn and Ann that there were no such things as fairies. Do you wonder?

The children's collections were growing fast. A corner of the "studio" was reserved for such articles as could not be kept in the house or out-of-doors. Here an odd assortment of things lay spread about to dry. Mr. Gay, who had been in the habit of retiring to the studio as a quiet, sweet place of rest and peace, retreated precipitately one morning after the first instalment of curiosities had been placed there, making angry remarks about "weird, unsightly, noisome things" which the children did not understand.

Of course the collections must be "studied up" and labeled before they were worthy to be included in the exhibition or to compete for a prize. That was understood. The collection itself was only half the victory.

"I shall not have much to show," said Roger. "I cannot collect birds, of course. But I am going to watch them and learn all I can about

them. And it is no fun to rob birds' nests, so I shall not have any eggs. But I know where there are some, and I am keeping track of them. It must be almost time for them to hatch. I watched a flock of crows this morning before breakfast. They are the funniest fellows I ever saw. I could almost understand what they were saying."

Jack kept his pebbles in the hollow of a large rock not far from the house. As time went on the hollow became filled with a beautiful collection of stones of a great variety of colors. Jack was never tired of sorting and handling them. As fast as new ones were found the less choice ones were discarded. On rainy days Jack might often be seen sitting on the edge of the big rock in his oilskin coat, rubber hat and boots, absorbed in sorting over his precious stones, which the wetness made more beautiful than ever.

Kathryn had pressed the wild flowers that she had collected in a large book. They were now ready to be arranged in order and mounted separately. Their number was constantly in-

creasing as the season changed and new flowers blossomed. It was a capital way to spend rainy days, this arranging, studying and labeling of the things that they had collected in fair weather.

Ann was greatly interested in the collections, though she would not be there to see the exhibition. She knew the names of many of the flowers. But what interested her most was the mounting of sea moss. The moss was found in little bunches and heaps among the rocks or spread out on the sand showing its delicate patterns in wonderful reds, greens or browns. These the children gathered and took to the house. Then they were thrown into a basin and allowed to float about until they were clean and free from sand. The prettiest ones were selected and placed in a smaller basin of water while squares of thick white paper were got ready; a piece of this was slipped into the water and under the piece of moss; lifted and drained. Then the fascinating part commenced of separating each tiny branch and spreading it out with a pin so that the perfect design of the whole lay on the

little square of paper. It required care and patience to do this well. Kathryn made sad work of it at first. She grew nervous and impatient when the paper crumpled, the pin stuck in and broke off the delicate points and the moss twisted the wrong way.

But Ann had been trained, like the old-fashioned children, to have patience and self-control above all things. One by one the dear little branches spread out under her steadily-moving pin until the whole pattern lay revealed as Nature had designed it. How different each one of these mosses was from the others! Ann thought she had never seen anything so lovely.

"I am going to make a book of mine. I shall tie the leaves together with red—no, with green ribbon, and take it home to Aunty for a souvenir," she said, surveying the row of mosses proudly.

"You are improving, Kate," said her mother, bending to look at hers. "Doing delicate work like this trains your fingers to be deft and sensitive. The more you do the better you will do them. You will have a fine contribution to

the exhibition. I wish Ann were going to be here to exhibit hers, too."

"Jack found something on the rocks that we would like to put in the exhibition but we could not bring it home very well," said Roger. "It was 'way down on the rocks. It looked just like a cucumber. Papa says it was a sea cucumber."

"Why do you not ask Captain Grampus what he knows about these sea creatures?" asked his mother. "Look them up in the natural history books. Then write out what you have found and read it at the exhibition. We shall all be glad to hear what you find. I would be glad to know about them, for one."

"I can do that, can't I?" said Roger.

"Of course you can," answered his mother. "I should not wonder if the things that we cannot really show will be the best things, after all. Don't you think so, Roger?"

"Yes," answered Roger. "I think they will."

CHAPTER XII

THE HIDDEN REEFS

“LET’S row over to ‘Fat Man’s Island,’ ” proposed Roger one morning as the four boys stood on the beach. “It is high tide and smooth as glass. I want to see if the gulls’ eggs are hatched yet. We saw some the day we went over and got the fir. Oh, you missed a sight, I can tell you !—Where is Jack ? ”

“There he is,” said Ralph, pointing to where one of Jack’s feet could be seen sticking straight up in the air over the top of a rock. “He is looking at a sea pool. But it’s too far under water to see much. Come on, I’m ready to go.”

Ralph stuck a seaweed flag in the top of his sand fort and stood watching it wave in the breeze.

“Let’s take two pairs of oars,” said Herbert, jumping to his feet. “I will do stroke. We will get there in no time.”

"Come, Jack! We're going to Fa-at Ma-an's Island! Hurry up!" shouted the boys.

Jack soon appeared with a very red face, rolling down his sleeve.

"I've got some corking stones," he said, emptying his pocket and exhibiting his collection. He put the stones in a niche of rock for safe keeping.

"Just look at this!" he added, opening his handkerchief. There lay a strange sea creature. It was long and green and just the size and shape of a cucumber. It was dead, of course.

"That must be a sea cucumber!" cried Roger, examining it. "Captain Grumpus was telling about sea cucumbers the other day. I thought it was a 'fish story,' and that he was just stuffing us, but here it is, all right."

"You had better leave it on the beach to dry, Jacky," remarked Ralph, drawing his head back suddenly from the animal. "If you leave it in the house you will drive your family out of house and home."

The cucumber was consigned to the niche of rock beside the stones. Then the boys ran

down the beach, pushed the dory off from the tiny pier with Jack in the bow, Ralph in the stern and Herbert and Roger at the oars.

Roger had become a fine oarsman during the last few weeks. He and Herbert had practised rowing together and they got on very well. They bent to the oars and the boat flew over the water. The muscles in Roger's arms had increased remarkably in size. He could row as well as Herbert now. Jack and Ralph could row, too, and all the boys were perfectly at home in a boat.

There was almost no wind, the tide was high. In a few minutes they rounded Lobster Point. A few minutes more and they were going over the spot where, far below, lay "Smart's Reefs." Ralph and Jack, peering down into the water, could not even see them below the boat. In about fifteen minutes Herbert and Roger brought the boat skilfully into a miniature cove between two flat rocks. The children climbed out, tied the boat securely so that it would not be left high and dry by the receding tide and scampered up the grassy slope of "Fat Man's Island"

toward the balsam woods which had been the scene of the remarkable transformation some weeks before.

"We must not forget and stay too long," said Roger. "Because if we stay until the tide gets off 'Smart's Reefs' we shall have to row 'way round them, and that will take ever so much longer."

Through the woods they passed and down to the shore where the gulls had laid their eggs among the rocks. With a wild swirl of wings shining white in the sunshine the gulls scattered in a cloud uttering frightened cries. There among the rocks lay hundreds and hundreds of large white eggs.

"Oh, let's take some eggs home and hatch them!" cried Herbert, taking two and putting one in each pocket. Ralph did likewise.

"Oh, don't! You can't hatch them, I know. And you're stealing them from the mother birds, anyhow," cried Roger. "I shall be sorry we came if you take those eggs."

"Oh, well, I could have come without you,"

said Herbert smoothly. "I would have got them anyhow. Don't fuss. There are plenty left."

"They won't miss them, will they?" asked Ralph, putting his hand to his pocket.

"Of course they will!" cried Roger.

Ralph looked at the flock of birds over his head. They looked very beautiful with the sun shining on their gray and white feathers. They were crying shrilly.

"Well, I don't care about the things anyhow," he said. "Let them have their old eggs." And he drew out the two eggs and put them back in the hollow of the rock from which he had taken them.

"Oh, look! Look!" cried Jack. He was stooping over, looking at two tiny, downy things like chickens that were running confusedly about, "peeping" in distress. They were baby gulls, just out of the shell.

Jack caught one of the little creatures without difficulty and held it in his hand, where it nestled down for an instant, blinking its little bright eyes at him. Then it hopped from his

hand and ran away as fast as its tiny feet could carry it.

The boys scrambled down over the rocks where the surf was pounding and roaring. Then they frightened a flock of sheep that were grazing on the slope above and laughed to see the silly things scamper away. There were some funny, woolly lambs in the flock.

"Charley Rover says these sheep live here all winter," said Herbert. "They belong to Cap'n Bass. He says they are just as wild as wild sheep. Cap'n Bass and Charley are coming over here to catch some of them to shear them, you know. He says perhaps he will let us see the sheep sheared. I'd like to see them, shouldn't you?"

"I should like to see the sheep caught, too," said Roger. "They must give the captain quite a chase."

"Guess is part sheep dog," went on Herbert. "He rounds them up and never hurts a hair of their—I mean a bit of their wool. Charley says there are two or three old sheep in this flock that have never been sheared in their lives."

The boys had by this time reached the woods again. Here they played that they were shipwrecked sailors who had eaten their last scrap of food. They must now eat one of their companions. They drew lots to find which of them was to be eaten. The lot fell to Herbert. But Herbert declared that Jack was the youngest; he should be eaten first. Herbert was the biggest anyway and could fight the rest of them.

Jack bethought himself at that moment that it must be getting late and that it was time to go. The others agreed that he was right, and they started for the shore where they had left the boat.

All had been still and serene in the woods; but as the four boys drew nearer the shore a strange sound met their ears. They looked at one another uneasily. What could it be? Soon they emerged from the woods and found a strong wind blowing. It nearly took them off their feet. The sound was loud now, a sort of dull roar in their ears. They hurried down the green slope. Then they realized what the sound was. Their hearts leaped into their mouths.

During their absence the wind had suddenly risen as it so often did on the island ; but so suddenly this time that they had not had time to perceive it. The water dashed high over the rocks. The sea was a mass of whitecaps. They could see their boat dancing about and bumping against the rocks in a dangerous way. The boys stood looking in dismay at this terrifying scene, terrible enough to dishearten braver spirits than theirs.

"We have got to get back somehow," said Roger at last. "There is no way out of it. I guess we can manage it all right, don't you, Herbert?"

"It would be safer to spend the night on the island," said Herbert, looking doubtfully at the whitecaps. "It would be rather a lark, too. What do you say, fellows?"

"But nobody knows where we are," objected Jack.

"And it would be mighty cold before morning, sleeping out-of-doors," added Ralph.

"Everybody would be worried to death about us, and think we were drowned for certain,"

said Roger. "If we had only told some one where we had gone. But not a soul knows."

"We'll have to get home then," said Herbert, jumping into the boat. "We've got two pairs of oars, anyway. That's lucky."

But when they were in the boat, and the two boys took up the oars and began to row, they for the first time fully realized their difficulty. The wind took things into its own hands. The tide, fortunately, was with them. They could have done nothing if it had not been for that. The boys worked manfully.

"Keep your eye on 'Lone Gull Point.' Have we gained any?" inquired Roger.

"Not an inch," groaned Herbert. "I have been watching it. We're farther back, if anything. See how the wind takes us straight over the opposite way!"

They struggled on. But "Lone Gull Point" remained in the same spot in relation to the boat. They had been working for fifteen minutes just to hold their own! It was discouraging. The boys' arms began to ache with the unaccustomed strain.

All at once Jack, who had been peering forward over the bow of the boat, screamed out:

“Roger! Herbert! Look out! The reefs! The reefs!”

Directly ahead of the boat a ripple of foam leaped along the surface of the water. The tide had gone down. They were near “Smart’s Reefs.”

Herbert and Roger bent to their oars with sinking hearts. It was the hardest work they had ever done. Then—another suspicious ripple to the right of them! Some way ahead it was, but the wind bore the dory toward it with irresistible force. Was that ripple over the reefs or not? They strained every nerve. Then another ripple ahead of them.

“Larboard! Larboard!” cried Jack and Ralph in a breath.

In an agony of fear the four boys watched that dreadful ripple draw nearer. Other ripples came and went, but that one remained. It must be the reefs. If the boat as much as touched the rocks with the water as rough as it was now Herbert and Roger knew that it

would be swamped. Nothing could save them. And they must not stop rowing for even a moment. Their arms ached fearfully. And the boat had not gained on "Lone Gull Point" by an inch!

"We're done for, I guess!" cried Herbert. "Say, I'm sorry I took those eggs, Roger. Hello! They're busted, anyway!"

Sure enough, a yellow liquid was oozing from his pockets.

"It's all right, old fellow," said Roger huskily. "Nothing matters now, I guess."

"Captain Grampus said it was—ten fathoms deep here, didn't he?" asked Jack.

"Ten fathoms! How much is a fathom?" faltered Ralph.

"A fathom is about six feet," answered Herbert. "That means that it is sixty feet deep here."

"That is twice as tall as our house, I guess," said Roger. "Think of it!"

"I don't want to think of it!" cried Jack. "What would Cap'n Garry say if he knew we were in the very place he told us to be careful of!"

Then, all of a sudden, just as they seemed to hear the water gurgling on the reefs almost beneath the bow—something happened. Herbert and Roger could not tell what it was at first; then they discovered that the wind was helping instead of hindering them. The boat was responding ever so little to their efforts. It veered a little and obeyed their guiding. The tide helped in its turn. In another moment they were bobbing and plunging forward, away from the reefs. "Lone Gull Point" lay behind them.

Soon the longed-for shape of Lobster Point loomed ahead. The Wind, Roger's friend, in a mighty grasp had changed its direction at just the right moment. It had saved them, instead of destroying them. For just one hour and three-quarters Herbert and Roger had been rowing against a heavy sea and contrary wind to cover a distance that they had gone over in fifteen minutes.

Ralph and Jack fastened the boat. The two rowers were so stiff and lame they walked very slowly home. Their arms ached excruciatingly.

The birds sang ; the sun shone brightly above the horizon line of ocean ; everything seemed calm and serene as the four boys walked gravely up the path—the four boys who had just escaped from a terrible death. How strange and unreal it all seemed !

CHAPTER XIII

HEPZIBAH

THE children were gathered around Mrs. Rover, who sat on the shady back porch picking over the blueberries for a "slump." If there are any New England housekeepers who do not know how to make Blueberry Slump I am sorry for them.

"So you want to hear another story?" asked Mrs. Rover. "Why, I'm afraid I've told you all I know. Did I ever tell you about Hepzibah, our old cow?"

"No, you never did. Tell us, please," said the children in a chorus, settling themselves in comfortable positions for listening.

"Well," began Mrs. Rover, "when I was a little girl and lived in the yellow house yonder with my brother and sisters, we had a cow named Hepzibah. Father and Mother both

said she was the most wonderful cow that ever lived. They were right, I'm sure ; for I have never heard of any other cow who had half as much sense as she had. You don't usually think of cows as being very bright, you know. I heard somebody say once that out of every herd of animals and out of every flock of birds there's always one that's got more sense than the rest of 'em. Well, Hepsy was one of those.

"I never did see such a cow. A real 'character' she was ; and we loved her dearly. Dear old Hepsy ! Full of the 'Old Scratch,' too. She'd see us children comin' across the pasture, and down she'd come—thumpety, thump !—after us as fast as she could run, with her horns lowered and makin' all the noise she could. Now we knew she wouldn't hurt us, and that she was just tryin' to scare us for fun ; but we'd make for the fence, I can tell you. Up she'd come, shakin' her horns, and pretend to be disappointed not to catch us. We'd laugh to see her when we were on the other side o' the fence."

"But didn't she ever hurt you ?" asked Jack.

“Hurt us? Bless you, no. Why, she wouldn’t hurt a fly. And such milk! Ten quarts every morning and night; an’ thicker an’ richer than any other milk I ever saw. Once a hand-organ stopped at the gate. When Hepsy heard that music she came gallopin’ down from the pasture just crazy-like. She’d never heard one before. Hand-organs never come here. This one must have come by mistake, I guess. Well, the music bewitched her. That cow began to dance—yes, I’m not jokin’,—she danced; back an’ forth, up an’ down, prancin’ an’ tossin’ her horns to the sound o’ that organ. Father an’ Mother came out an’ we all stood an’ watched her. Dear, happy old Hepzibah. I shall meet her again in the other world, I’m sure of that.”

“It is funny to think of a cow dancing,” laughed Kathryn.

“We children used to love to feed her,” went on Mrs. Rover, after putting a large blueberry into each of the children’s mouths. “Whenever we had anything that we knew she was fond of, potato peelin’s or corn husks or such like, we’d go to the bars an’ call, ‘Hepsy! Hepsy!’ She’d

be 'way out o' sight, maybe, but she'd hear us, always. Down she'd gallop from the far end o' the pasture. An' then she'd have a feast, an' we'd enjoy seein' her eat it just as much as she enjoyed eatin' it.—But this won't do, sittin' here when I ought to be makin' that slump."

Mrs. Rover rose and bustled into the kitchen, the children at her heels. They loved to watch her cook. The berries were soon stewing merrily while she buttered slices of bread and lined a big dish with them. Then, when the berries were cooked and sweetened, she poured some of them over the layer of bread ; then came another layer of bread, and one of sauce ; still another layer ; and the pudding was done. A plate was placed on top and a flat-iron on the plate in order to press it down. Then it was set away in a cool place and some cold sauce was made to eat with it.

"There!" said Mrs. Rover as she turned the hard sauce out of the mould into a blue and white dish. "If you don't think that's the nicest puddin' you ever tasted, I'll miss my guess. An' if you hadn't seen me make it you

never would guess what it was made of. It's good enough for an epicure."

"A—what, Mrs. Rover?" asked Jack.

"An epicure; one who likes good things to eat," was the reply; "one who's real partic'lar, you know."

"I am an epicature!" exclaimed Jack, some time after, when he had tasted his first mouthful of "Slump." "I must be an epicature, for I like good things to eat, and I like this partic'larly well."

CHAPTER XIV

HARE AND HOUNDS

THE Gay family, with the exception of Jack, was sitting down to a nice supper. Roger had come home an hour before, but Jack was still missing.

"We played 'Hare and Hounds,' you know," said Roger, a little uneasily, taking his place at table. "Herbert and I were the hares. We didn't go very fast, and we thought they'd catch up easily enough. They couldn't have got lost."

They had eaten the crisp lettuce and radish salad which had been picked from the boys' garden and were starting on the raspberries and cream, with some of Kathryn's sponge cakes, when Mrs. Gay exclaimed :

"I heard a step then. I guess it is Jack."

"If it is not he, we will start out to look for him as soon as supper is over," said Mr. Gay, watching the door.

It was Jack. There he stood at the door, such a forlorn spectacle that they all tried not to laugh, though he did look very funny. He had no hat. His clothes were covered with dirt and briars; his boots and stockings were a mass of mud; and water was dripping from his hair and garments.

"Well, Jack! You poor hound!" exclaimed his father. "Did those hares give you a chase?"

"Yes!" said Jack with chattering teeth.

"Not another word until he has changed his clothes and had something hot to drink!" exclaimed his mother, hurrying him off up-stairs.

When Jack, clothed once more and in his right mind, was seated at the table, finishing with great enjoyment his raspberries and cream, he was allowed to tell his story.

"Well, we chased them up through the woods, and then down the hill to the pasture," said Jack. "Ralph stepped on a snake and got an awful scare. Then we started across the next pasture, following the scent. There were some cows there, but we didn't notice them, and we'd got half-way across the pasture when we heard

something coming. We looked round and there was a big bull chasing us. My, we were scared! We ran for the fence, and the bull was almost up to us. Ralph went through the fence head first. I tried to crawl under and got stuck on a nail and tore my clothes. But we got away from that bull! You ought to have heard him roar and seen him paw the ground! We thought he was going to tear up the fence and come after us, so we just sprinted for the woods as fast as we could go. And when we reached the woods we remembered that we had lost the scent! There was nothing for it but to go back to the fence and work along until we found the place where the hares had crossed it. That took a long time. But we found it at last. And then we went through the woods ——”

“But what became of the bull?” asked Kathryn.

“Oh, he was tearing round the pasture,” replied Jack. “We kept close under the fence and behind bushes so he didn’t see us. Well, —we went through the woods and lost the scent again and had to hunt for it; and then

we came to a brook, and we were trying to hurry so—well, Ralph got stuck in the mud and I had to pull him out; and then I fell into the brook, and Ralph had to pull me out—and then Ralph walked against a leaf that had a wasp on it, and it stung him!—and ——”

“Don’t blame him,” murmured Mr. Gay.
“The wasp, I mean.”

“Poor little fellow!” said Mrs. Gay.

“Do you mean the boy or the wasp?” inquired Mr. Gay.

“The boy, of course!” replied Mrs. Gay. “Go on with your story, Jacky.”

“Well,” said Jack, “we had to put mud on it.”

“The wasp?” inquired the irrepressible Mr. Gay.

“No! No! His nose.”

“The wasp’s n ——?” began Mr. Gay.

“Ralph’s nose! Of course!” cried Jack indignantly. “If you don’t behave I won’t go on with the story. Well,—we were awful looking sights, you know. Ralph looked worse than I did.”

"Impossible!" murmured his father.

"Ralph did look awfully funny. He was holding a great mass of mud to the end of his nose. It hurt awfully, you know—the nose, of course!—and the mud trickled down all over his clothes. My! He was a sight! And we had to walk home the rest of the way along the road; and we met all the village people coming home from a party, and they laughed at us! My, but Ralph was mad! He just hopped right up and down! But then he couldn't help laughing, in spite of the pain in his nose. And then we came home. That's all."

"Quite enough, I should say," said his father. "I guess you will not want to play 'Hare and Hounds' for some time."

"I guess I've had enough to last a while," said Jack, passing his saucer for more raspberries.

CHAPTER XV

A MOONLIGHT SAIL

MR. GAY had been promising the children ever since they had come to the "Delectable Isle" that on the first fine night when there was a moon and a breeze they would get Captain Grampus to take them on a moonlight sail. Several beautiful evenings had passed, but the breeze had been lacking. It was very apt to die down after sunset. But now the wished-for combination had arrived. It was the night of the full moon, and such a glorious night! There were clouds, but they added to the beauty. Great masses of them would float across the sky and hide the moon. Wonderful silver edges would appear, the brightness would increase; then the moon herself would emerge from the mysterious blackness and sail forth majestically clear.

The house, the chimney, the piazza, all the familiar objects cast long, weird shadows. The

trees seemed to take on a spectral life, transformed by the wizard moon. Every one spoke in whispers as they walked silently along the grassy path that led to the beach. The children cast awed glances to right and left. The shadow of the fence seemed to leap at them. A slender beach tree that stood beside the path seemed to raise its arms suddenly and lean toward them. It was as though they were in a new world, swayed by the witchery of the moon. Everything around them, they themselves, perhaps, were under its power and unable to resist.

Kathryn loitered behind the others and looked eagerly about. If the fairies ever showed themselves clearly, it would be now. She had a feeling that they were all about her. If she were alone, she was sure they would come and frolic with her. She had half a mind to slip away from the others and stay there and see what would happen. But that would never do, of course. They would miss her and would come looking and calling. Oh, dear! All the mystery would be spoiled, and the fairies frightened away. Besides, she would miss the sail. And

there was Ann. She must not leave her. So Kathryn stayed with the others.

"Here we are. Look out and don't fall. Step over this rock. That's right."

How strange and hollow her father's voice sounded! How strange the beach looked! Every rock and pebble seemed to stand by itself. There lay the yacht, waiting for them in a path of light that lay across the water. On the beach was a black shadow that waved its hand to them. It must be the captain.

The captain was in one of his silent moods. He helped them into the dory, bent to the oars, and rowed toward the boat. Charley Rover was standing on the bow. The oars creaked rhythmically in the rowlocks. Great splashes of phosphorescence followed each dip of the oar. The moon suddenly disappeared beneath a cloud as Charley leaned over and helped them on board; they settled themselves in their favorite places; the sail caught the wind and they glided smoothly beyond the point and out into the open, just as the moon burst out and shone down making a glimmering path across the open ex-

panse of shining wonder. They seemed to be in an enchanted boat on their way to fairy-land.

Little Ann pressed Kathryn's hand. Then she sat speechless with delight. Once settled in her place in the bow she did not speak nor move. Kathryn, stretched at full length with her face over the bow, lost herself in a beautiful dream.

By and by Mrs. Gay started a low, rippling song that blended in with the sound of the wind and the waves and the flapping sail. Some of the others joined in. The moon shone serenely down upon the phantom ship as it glided smoothly along.

Charley Rover climbed aloft, hand over hand, like a monkey, and settled himself comfortably in the rigging, where he swung sleepily to and fro, much to the boys' wonder and admiration. Guess curled himself up and kept guard below. Suddenly Charley called out:

"Cap'n Bass is shearin' sheep by moonlight, sure as you're born! Let's stop a bit an' let the kids see him do it."

So Charley rowed the children ashore and led them up the steep, rocky path that led to the fisherman's house, a tiny white box of a place standing firm upon a rock.

Near the house was an old dory that had been filled with earth and planted with flowers. It was now a mass of bright colored blooms. Kathryn and Ann were delighted with this.

Captain Bass looked up and nodded to the children as they came near, then went on with his work of shearing the sheep.

How still and limp the creature lay on the captain's knee while he skilfully clipped the wool from it! And what a queer, skinny looking thing it looked when he had finished his work! With one sniff at his cast-off clothing the sheep, looking very much surprised and a little mortified at its appearance, ran away out of sight to the other end of the yard.

"What made him lie so limp and still, with his head falling down?" asked Jack. "Was he frightened, or didn't he care?"

"Blamed if I know," said Charley. "Sheep are silly things, anyway. We hed a great time

ketchin' 'em this afternoon, didn't we, Guess? An' Guess behaved like a gentleman an' rounded 'em up in great style. But he didn't bite 'em once."

"It must have been exciting," said Herbert. "Say, I'd like to go with you some time, Charley."

"You'd soon be glad to go home, I guess," answered Charley. "We had a tough time getting these uns, I can tell you. Chased 'em up and down all over the island; through bushes, over rocks, down steep banks. They'd jump and run like the wind. Thought we'd never ketch 'em in the world. These five took the whole afternoon. There's about a dozen left yet, the wildest of the lot. But we'll git 'em, won't we, Guess?"

Guess stood watching the shearing process intently. He had an important air as though he realized how necessary a part he had played in the whole affair. Clip, clip! went the little instrument in the captain's skilful hands. The wool fell in even rows and rolled to the ground. The children held their breaths as the clipper

wound its way quickly around throat and ears of the sheep. But never once did it slip or even scratch the skin.

The old, weather-beaten fisherman with his long white beard, bending over the helpless form of the sheep, made a weird picture in the moonlight.

"Time to go!" said Charley. "Good-night, Cap'n!"

They were soon back on the boat again. By and by the black silhouette of the trees stood out. The familiar outlines of Lobster Point appeared. There was "Eagle's Nest" peeping from the tree tops.

"Another thing to remember," whispered Ann, as she gave one last look at the water and the "Sea Rover" lying in the path of light.

"Good-night, beautiful Moon!" said Kathryn. She threw her a kiss when no one was looking.

CHAPTER XVI

“ HAYIN’ ”

ROGER, Kathryn and Jack and Ann, pails in hand, went scampering across the fields, over the quaint stile with its two little steps on each side, which the children loved to climb, through the strip of woods and out upon the road. The wild roses were still blossoming, late as it was; deep pink, as they always are near the salt water. A sound of wheels came from down the road. Few vehicles passed. The children waited to see who this might be.

“ Giddap! Wake up, Noah! Here you, Job! Haw there! Come on, now!” came a familiar voice. In a moment a hay cart appeared with Charley Rover walking beside it, urging on the two patient, slow moving oxen. Guess barked a welcome to them.

“ Hullo, there!” he exclaimed as he caught sight of the children. “ Where you bound?”

"We were going berrying," said Roger, stroking the oxen's noses.

"Give us a ride, won't you?" asked Jack, who had already climbed into the empty hay cart.

"Sure!" cried Charley grinning. "Why don't ye come hayin' with me? I'll give ye-all the most excitin' trip ye ever took. Come on! Little gals'll go too, hey?"

"Where are you going for the hay?" asked Kathryn. "I would like to go. I love to get into hay. Don't you, Ann?"

"Yes indeed," replied Ann.

Charley Rover grinned.

"Ye couldn't guess where I'm goin' arter it," he said. "Well, I'll tell yer. I'm goin' acrost the cassy fer it. Right acrost the ma'sh 'n' over the cassy; git loaded up; then back agin afore tide rises.—Come on ef ye're goin'."

"What is a cassy, Charley?" asked Kathryn looking about inquiringly.

"That there's the cassy, ahead of us," explained Charley, pointing to the cove that separated them from the point of land opposite them.

This sounded exciting. To drive across the causeway and back again before the tide had time to turn! With a whoop of delight the four children tumbled into the cart and sat on the hard boards.

"Ha! Ha! You're game kids!" laughed Charley, starting the team on. "But hold on tight, now. Take keer o' the little gals. I wouldn't hev nothin' heppen ter yer. Tek hold o' the sides, an' hold on tight! Haw! Go on, Job! On, Noah! Gee there!"

Straight up the opposite bank with a heave and a jolt, down with a bang across the uneven ground; with a terrifying lurch they went across the marshy stretch of land that led to the causeway. Then straight on to the muddy flats left bare by the tide, *splash!* through pools and *crash* over rocks.

The children laughed as they had never laughed before. With each jolt they fell forward or backward in a heap in the bottom of the cart. *Bump* would go their heads against the sides. They "felt" black and blue spots appearing all over them. When they saw a

rock looming ahead they would all howl in anticipation, and then scream loudly as they jounced over it. Charley had been right indeed. It was the most exciting ride that they had ever had. The latter, who now sat on the seat in front, turned grinning to them, saying often :

“Wall, now, wa’n’t thet a good un, hey? Teeth all right? Ye’re all there, ain’t ye? Don’t fall out,” and so forth.

“Oh, I never, never laughed so!” cried Kathryn, trying to wipe her eyes, but instead giving herself a blow on the nose as the cart lurched.

“It is —— Ha! ha!—*Oh!*” cried Ann, as Kathryn and she cracked their heads together suddenly.

“This is the larkiest lark!” cried Roger, falling unexpectedly backward with his heels in the air.

“It’s cor-or-orking!” stuttered Jack, holding on with both hands and looking anything but happy.

“Tide’s turnin’,” announced Charley, looking down at the deepening pools and tiny streams

of water that as they progressed began to run more quickly through the sand of the causeway. "We got ter hurry, or we'll hev ter swim back. Shan't we, Guess?"

They climbed the opposite bank, and rolled and strained their way up to where the haycocks stood ready to be taken away. It was fun to tread down the hay and help pile it in the cart. Charley was a wild, reckless, jolly fellow, and very good company. He enlivened the work of haying with exciting tales of adventure. At last the cart was full, and the children comfortably settled in the soft hay. Charley stood back and surveyed them.

"Wall, ye look tol'able comfort'ble," he remarked. "But ye'll hev ter hol' on tighter'n ever now, I tell ye! Won't git banged so much, but ye may tumble off. So whatever happens, hol' on tight, mind! I won't let ye git drowned!"

"All right, Charley, but let's not wait!" said Roger. "We shall be all right, but don't wait!"

"No, let's not wait!" cried Kathryn and

Jack, thinking of the tide that was rising surely and steadily in the causeway below them. Ann sat still and said nothing. If she was frightened she made no sign.

Sure enough, when the hay cart stood on one end and plunged forward into the causeway a foot of water rippled and laughed over its surface.

"Now don't ye be scared," warned Charley, taking his seat and holding the reins carefully. "Ye may git jounced an' splashed, 'cause I can't see all the rocks as I could afore, now they're covered up; but I know where most of 'em be, an' I've driv over this 'ere cassy more times'n ye can think."

It had been an exciting ride over; but that was nothing to the trip back. To be riding through the water! How strange it seemed! One of the oxen stumbled over a rock and nearly fell, but Charley was equal to the occasion, and with a "Look out there, Job!" held him up. Once or twice the cart stood on one wheel and seemed about to overturn; but with a lurch, a splash and a bump it righted itself.

Charley Rover knew what he was about, and could manage a hay cart as well as a power boat.

As they drew near the center of the causeway, the water came up to the hubs of the wheels. The children held their breaths and looked at each other with round eyes and tightened lips. They were terribly frightened. But they would not for the world have allowed Charley Rover to know it.

"Wouldn't yer ma be s'prised ter see ye now?" inquired Charley, turning about and winking at them mischievously. "Yer pa'd be skeered too, I'll bet. Say, I've a good mind ter unhitch them oxen an' ride ashore on 'em, an' leave ye here in the cart. Ye'd float ashore, p'raps."

He squinted wickedly at the sky. Then he looked down at the water and wagged his head doubtfully.

"Looks like a storm," he said. "I've heerd tell there's a quagmire here'bouts some'res. If ye stop, same 's we're doin', why, ye sink in an' sink in, down, an' down, an' the water an' sand



THE WATER CAME UP TO THE HUBS

closes up over yer head an' ye smothercates. Awful, ain't it?" He grinned at the children.

"All right, Charley," said Roger, laughing. "But go on, please. See how the water is rising over the wheels."

"Wall," said Charley, "I could git out all right on the oxen. But I couldn't undertek ter git ye-all out. My! Tide is risin'!"

The joke had gone about far enough. The children were growing angry and terrified. Charley Rover had the reputation of being a mischievous, reckless fellow. How did they know if he might not carry the joke beyond his own control?

But Charley had not the slightest intention of allowing harm to come to the children, or to his load of hay, or to his oxen. He was only enjoying this unusual opportunity of teasing, and trying to see if these "dudes" had "sand" enough to stand it. He urged on the oxen, and before long the team had gained dry land once more. The children looked back at the water through which they had passed, and thrilled to think of what an experience it had been, after all.

"I was jest tryin' ter skeer ye a little," said Charley. "Didn't mind, did ye? Wanted ter see ef ye was made o' the right stuff. An' ye are, by gum! I'm proud o' ye! But ye did look kinder jest a little bit skeered, back thar fer a minute or two. Don't blame ye, neither."

"It has been great!" said Roger, starting to climb down. "Ow!" It was lucky that Charley lifted him, for he was so stiff that he would have fallen.

"Ouch!" and "Ow-ow!" cried Kathryn, Jack and Ann in turn as they tried to walk. But a few kicks and waves of the arms limbered them out and they were able to limp slowly home, after waving good-bye to Charley and the hay cart.

"Well, it has been a corking trip," said Roger. "And I've got some black and blue spots to show for it."

"So have I," said Kathryn. "But I would not have missed it for anything."

"Neither would I," said Ann.

"I'm all one black and blue spot," said Jack. "But it has been corking! Corking!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE SEA DOG

ALL the next day and the following day the fog had lain thick and impenetrable over the "Delectable Isle," as Mrs. Gay called it. Now and then the sun would seem to be getting the better of it and would shine out clear ; the children would run out on the piazza and watch for the blue sky ; then the fog would close in again so thickly as to hide even the near-by trees. There was danger of getting lost if one went far from the house. But toward night the wind came and tore away the fog, as if angry with it for persisting so long.

Roger, lying warmly in his snug bed, shivered to think how his wild playfellow must be rollicking through the forest and along the shore ; a reckless companion in such a mood as this. The hemlock tree near Roger's window.

tossed its branches and writhed and bent. But it did not break; it had withstood fiercer onslaughts than this. Roger got up and looked out. Great black masses of cloud were chasing each other across the sky. Now and then the moon would peep forth for a moment and Roger could then see the black tree tops waving wildly to and fro against the sky. A booming sound came from the direction of the sea. Roger leaped back into bed and drew the bedclothes around his ears, his teeth chattering.

“My, what a storm!” he said to himself. “I am glad I am not out on the water to-night. I wonder if there are boats out? Of course there must be, lots of them. Charley Rover—his mother said he was out deep sea fishing. Hope—he’s—got—back ——”

Roger was fast asleep; sleeping so soundly that he did not hear the rain come beating on the piazza roof and pour in torrents into the cistern on the back porch.

In the morning it had stopped raining when Roger looked out of his window, but the storm was not over. The old hemlock was still toss-

ing, and clouds hung heavy and low over the steely ocean.

"Come into the Sea Room, children!" called Mr. Gay from his post of observation in front of the big window that took up one side of the room and looked off over miles and miles of open sea.

"See the monster gnash his teeth," he went on, pointing to a wide line of foam that marked the shore line. "Now he seems to draw back his lips and hiss. Now he laughs—what a terrible laugh! We will go down to the chasm and see it nearer. How is the tide, Mama?"

Mrs. Gay reached for the "Old Farmers' Almanac" that always hung beside her desk, ready for consultation about winds, tides, stars, eclipses, postage rates, cab fares, advice about farming and everything else that any one could possibly want to know.

"The tide is high at noon," she said. "It is just about the right time for us to start, now, is it not? But it is going to rain again, I think."

"Oilskin suits and warm clothes, children," said their father. "And we must not forget

that the tide is coming in, and that Old Ocean is in a dangerous mood, and not to be trifled with."

"It is a dreadful storm at sea," said Mrs. Gay, looking out anxiously over the water. "There will be wrecks, I am afraid. I hope Mrs. Rover's son has got back safely. I will go down now and ask her."

Mrs. Rover was putting a steaming hot breakfast on the table. She looked pale, but she smiled cheerfully as Mrs. Gay entered the dining-room.

"No, Charley's not got back yet," she said, looking out of the window at the black, stormy water. "But Charley's been out in worse storms than this. I guess he's found a safe harbor somewhere. I ain't worryin'. I can't. I just try to think o' somethin' else. Sailors' wives an' brothers an' mothers have to. Why, if they didn't they'd do nothin' but worry all the time. The wind did come up sudden last night. I heard it. I was awake an' listenin'. But Charley's all right, I know. I just couldn't lose him, you know!"

Mrs. Rover clasped her hands tightly and stood looking out of the window.

"Of course your son is safe," cried Mrs. Gay. "He was probably in a snug harbor long before the storm broke. I am sure of that. See, it is growing brighter. Perhaps it will clear this afternoon."

"I guess it will, perhaps," said Mrs. Rover. "An' it's real encouragin' to hear you say so, anyway; an' it's a comfort to have somebody to talk to. Sometimes in the winter, when I don't see any women-folks for three months at a stretch often,—well, it's kinder lonesome an' hard to keep your mind off worryin'.—Dear me, the oatmeal'll be gettin' cold, an' I forgot to ring the breakfast bell."

As soon as breakfast was over they put on their wraps, and were soon paddling through the woods toward the cliffs, whence came a great commotion that grew louder and more terrifying as they drew nearer to it. They were a queer-looking group, clad in waterproofs, thick coats or oilskins, bending low against the wind, their hats drawn over their eyes. But do you

suppose they cared a rap how they looked? Not they!

Down through the dripping woods they went, over beds of soft, richly colored moss; past beautiful lichen-covered rocks green and brilliant in the wetness. The lichen on the trees which in dry weather had been gray or brown was now crying out, almost, in its brilliance of color. Then out they stepped upon the open cliff, in the midst of the deafening roar and tumult of a storm at sea! It was terrific!

The chasm lay just beneath them. A great wave came tearing forward with a roar, hurled itself against the sides of the chasm and filled the air with spray.

"Ha! Ha! That was a good one!" shouted Roger, perching on a rock and clinging to it to keep from being blown away.

"There's a bigger one coming —— Oh, look!" screamed Jack, pointing toward the water, where a monster wave was rearing itself.

Kathryn and Ann snuggled up in a crevice of rock and prepared to enjoy themselves while Mrs. Gay stood behind a tall rock with only her

head sticking over the top. She could see beautifully and could "duck" quickly when a wave dashed too near.

"It will not be safe to stay here long," shouted Mr. Gay. They were obliged to shout in order to make themselves heard above the roar of the storm. Mr. Gay leaned forward to peer into the chasm.

"There is a saying, you know," he went on, "that the seventh wave is always bigger than the others. There will be some smaller waves. Count them. There will be about seven. Then will come a big one —— *Ow!*"

Mr. Gay flattened himself against the rock as a wave filled the chasm, leaped up and drenched him from head to foot.

"There! Did I not tell you? That was the seventh wave," said Mr. Gay, as he shook himself like a Newfoundland dog.

"The tide is coming in at a tremendous rate," said Mrs. Gay. "It will soon cover the rocks where we are. A big wave might come and sweep us off. Remember the story of Miss Weatherbee's Chair. And that was very much

higher than this place, and the tide was going down, too.—Come back, Roger! Don't be fool-hardy. That is not bravery, you know."

Roger was leaning forward near the edge of the rock, looking at something far out on the water.

"What is that black thing out there?" he asked. "See, on top of that wave? It is something alive!"

"It is alive," cried Kathryn. "I have been watching it for a long time. I thought at first it was a piece of seaweed."

"It does look alive," said Mrs. Gay, looking intently at the floating thing. "It does look alive!" she repeated. "See it bob up and down."

Mr. Gay took off his glasses, polished them and looked long and carefully. "By Jingo!" he exclaimed. "The poor little thing!"

"It is a little black dog, isn't it?" cried Jack. "Oh, dear, do you suppose it will be drowned?"

"Now it is going to be dashed onto that rock!" cried Kathryn, covering her eyes, as a wave seized the little object and hurled it ruth-

lessly forward. But the next moment it was bobbing about as before, in the midst of a mass of foam and bubbles.

Mr. Gay adjusted his glasses and examined it again.

"It certainly acts as if it were alive," he said, after a careful scrutiny. "But nothing can live long in such a sea. Sooner or later it will be dashed against those sharp rocks—poor little thing! There it goes!"

They all held their breath as the funny little black mass bobbed merrily up after being hurled to apparently certain death.

"But what can it be?" asked Kathryn. "Is it a fish? It doesn't look like a fish."

"No. It has got ears. I can see them," said Jack.

"But how could an animal have got out there?" asked Roger.

"That is the mystery," said his father. "The trouble is, we are powerless to do anything to save it. Moreover, it is beginning to rain. The tide is getting too high for us to stay here longer. We must go."

"And leave that poor little thing out there? Oh, can't we do something?" exclaimed Kathryn, beginning to cry.

"Let me climb down. Perhaps I can catch hold of it when the wave throws it up!" cried Roger, preparing to descend.

"No! No, Roger!" cried his mother. "Why, child, you would be swept off the rock by the very next wave! See the force and strength of that water. You could not even get down. Poor little creature, we must leave it to its fate."

"I am afraid we must," said Mr. Gay. "If there were anything that we could do, I would gladly try. Come, let us go."

They turned and went slowly, with many a backward look at the tiny black object still bobbing about in the sea's mighty grasp, apparently unconscious of its danger.

None too soon, it seemed, had they left, for with a mighty roar a great wave hurled itself over the rocks where they had been but a moment before.

"We were careless, careless to stay so long!" exclaimed Mr. Gay. "One of us might have

been swept off that rock. We ought to have known better than to stay."

"We shouldn't, if it had not been for the Sea Dog," said Kathryn.

"No, we should not have, if it had not been for the Sea Dog," said Mrs. Gay. "Poor little Sea Dog!"

"Poor little Sea Dog!" sighed Jack.

At three o'clock that afternoon the rain let up a little. Roger, who had been watching impatiently from the Sea Room window, threw on his oilskin coat, hat and rubber boots, and hurried to the door.

"Going out again, Roger?" asked his mother, smiling at him and nodding understandingly. "You won't be foolhardy, and take risks with the sea, will you? But you will not, I know. I can trust you, Roger," and Mrs. Gay passed into the next room, still smiling.

"Isn't Mama a brick?" thought Roger to himself, as he made his way out to the rocks above the chasm. "How Oliver Jackson's mother would have fussed and fussed if she had thought he was going to a place like this.

She wouldn't let him go, most likely. But Mama knows she can trust me. And she can, by Jingo! I won't try to be funny. Now, where is it?"

Roger looked along the glistening brown rocks, which, a few hours before, had lain under many feet of foaming water. What he looked for was not there. He climbed down nearer to the water's edge. The waves still frothed and leaped snarling toward him. Suddenly he stopped. Down in a pool between two rocks a small black mass was being tossed to and fro in a bed of seaweed. Roger ran toward it and almost reached it when an angry wave surged up. He must be careful. The little thing did not bob about so merrily as before. Was it only the movement of the waves that made it seem alive? Or did it turn feebly toward him?

Watching his chance, Roger stooped down and grasped it. It was heavy as lead, and slipped back into its bed of seaweed, which closed over it for a moment, as another wave dashed up. He staggered back and fell sprawl-

ing on the slippery rocks. Roger sat staring stupidly at the strange thing. It looked positively uncanny now, as it rocked back and forth. How slimy and cold it had felt! And why was it so heavy? Alone on the rocks with the waves dashing about him and the wind shrieking mockingly in his ears, Roger felt decidedly "queer."

But each wave left the rocks more uncovered, and the pool shallower. Roger clambered forward again, and bracing himself firmly, lifted the Sea Dog and fell with it on the rocks. It was as much as he could do to lift it. Then he turned and looked at the beast. Water-soaked and covered with sand and seaweed it lay there motionless and still, a black woolen dog, with stiff ears, bead eyes, a ridiculous short tail. Around its neck was a bedraggled red ribbon. It was some child's beloved plaything.

Roger, after much poking and thumping and squeezing, managed at last to lighten it of its weight of salt water. Then he carried it home and placed it in the middle of the piazza, where it stood up sturdily, though it lurched a little, as if weak from its experiences. Roger called

the others and exhibited his prize with much pride.

"Dear Sea Dog! So you are only a flannel dog after all!" cried Jacky, hugging the slimy, dripping thing.

"I am relieved that it was not alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Gay. "Some child is crying its eyes out for it this minute, I expect."

"Where do you suppose it came from?" asked Kathryn.

"The nearest land on that side of the island is fifteen miles away," remarked Mr. Gay. "The mainland is off the opposite side of the island."

"Could it have floated so far, papa?" asked Roger, aghast.

"Where else could it come from?" asked Jack.

"It might—I hope not—there might have been a wreck at sea,—who knows? Its little mistress may be under the waves," said Mrs. Gay.

"We shall never know," said Mr. Gay. "If he could speak, he might have a great tale of adventure to tell us, this voyager."

They all remained looking and wondering at the Sea Dog, who stood with his four feet planted pluckily apart, his ears cocked jauntily, his tail more comical than ever, and a wise, knowing look in his bead eyes. For both he and they well knew that they never would know whence the Sea Dog had come!

CHAPTER XVIII

MRS. ROVER

MRS. ROVER was sitting in a rocking-chair by the window, working busily on her nets. But she kept an eye out of the window and over the black water. The waves were still lashing and beating over Lobster Point. Now and then the spray would go over the tops of the trees that stood many rods inland from the point. The storm was still raging, but it was not so severe as it had been.

A knock sounded on Mrs. Rover's door, and in response to her quick, nervous invitation to enter, Kathryn opened the door and came in. She was clothed in a yellow oilskin hat that covered up all of her head but her rosy little face, an oilskin coat that came down below her knees, and rubber boots. She looked like one of her brothers. But as she did not take off

her hat when she came in, Mrs. Rover knew she must be a girl. Kathryn closed the door behind her.

"Are you busy, Mrs. Rover?" asked Kathryn. "Because if you are I will go away. But Mama asked me to bring you these magazines and I thought that if you would like to have me I would stay with you a little while. Has Charley come home yet?"

"You blessed child!" exclaimed Mrs. Rover. "No, Charley ain't come yet. I'm so lonesome, and it'll be nice to have some one to talk to. Take your things right off. Here, I'll put 'em on a chair near the fire where they'll dry. Not too near the fire. That's right. Ah, you look like a little girl now, in that pink dress. Here's a little chair that'll just fit you. It was Charley's."

"Won't you show me how to make a net?" asked Kathryn.

"I was just goin' to say that now was the time to learn," said Mrs. Rover, selecting a wooden needle, showing Kathryn how to wind the cord on it and then setting her to work. It

was fussy at first. But after a while Kathryn got the stitch right and caught the "knack" of throwing the cord over, knotting it twice, and making the mesh correctly. It was interesting work.

"What made you jump so when I came in, Mrs. Rover?" asked Kathryn. "You looked so frightened. Did I startle you? You were not expecting to see any one in this storm, were you?"

Mrs. Rover let her work fall in her lap and looked out of the window across the water.

"No," she answered. "I wasn't expectin' to see any one. But when you knocked I was thinkin' of another storm like this one, only worse, when I was sittin' watchin' at the window just as I am now. Only I was watchin' for my husband then; an' now it's my son. Two days an' nights I waited an' watched an' watched an' waited. An' then a knock came. I'd been sort of watchin' for it an' dreadin' it, but hopin'. It was only a neighbor come to say that some pieces of wreckage had been washed ashore off Dead Man's Cove. But they couldn't tell—an'

they never knew. An' I never heard a word about Bill except that the 'Nancy Bright' went down there. The 'Nancy Bright' was his boat, named for me. The piece o' wreckage had the name on it."

"Oh, dear!" cried Kathryn. "Oh, dear!" She dropped her work.

"Charley was a baby then, lyin' in his little cradle," said Mrs. Rover. "But there, the idea of my talkin' so, and makin' you feel bad! Charley's safe. He's been gone over storms before this. These summer storms ain't anything. It's in February that we have 'em. You'd ought to see the waves dash up then. Why, the spray comes 'way up here. Sometimes I think this little house'll get washed out to sea. But it was built to stand rough weather. Firm as a rock."

"I would like to be here in winter and see a big storm once," said Kathryn.

"Storms are grand things to see," said Mrs. Rover. "It's fine to listen to the roar o' the waves when your family an' friends are safe. Fishermen's wives feel different; it means so

many things to them. But we love it just the same. Yes, we love it."

"I suppose you like the woods, too," said Kathryn.

"The woods? Why, I haven't never been into those woods a half a dozen times in my life. I haven't been through those woods for fifteen years. No, I don't care much for the woods. I'm so afraid of gettin' lost. I'm not much of a traveler. I ain't ever been off this island in my life. I was born in the yellow house on Bright's Point. Moved over here when I was married, an' here I've been ever since. My son Charley's been all round everywhere on his fishin' cruises. He's been on the sea all his life. Comes home an' stays a while; then off he goes again. He's a reg'lar sea dog, he is. An' as for Cap'n Garry, why, he's been most all over the world. He's been to Newfoundland, too. You'd ought to hear him tell about it."

"Now won't you tell me a story, please, Mrs. Rover, about when you were a little girl and lived in the yellow house?" said Kathryn.

Mrs. Rover rocked back and forth energetically for a few minutes, stopping thoughtfully now and then, then rocking again faster than before.

"I don't know as I can think of much to tell," she said. "But we used to hev mighty good times when we were children. We all went to the big schoolhouse that used to be on the top of the hill. They moved it away to the village years ago. There was seventy scholars in those days ; all ages an' sizes, you know, from the little tots to the big long legged boys. We used to drive to school in the big sledge in winter, through the drifts, laughin' an' shoutin' an' singin'. My, it was fun ! There was always plenty goin' on. We'd have quiltin's an' rinktums in the evenin's. The big farmhouse on the hill—you can see the ruins o' the chimney there now—was a fine place for dances. The kitchen ran the whole length o' the house. We'd clear away the chairs an' dance. Somebody'd play the fiddle for us. Oh, those was good times ! Young folks don't have such good times as those now. An' there ain't many young folks since the fishermen's families all moved

away after the fish went. It was a busy fishin' village before that. But they're all gone now, 'cept two or three families."

"Why did the fish go, Mrs. Rover?" asked Kathryn.

"Wall, some say it was because they threw back alive too many dogfish that they had caught an' didn't want; an' they ate up the other fish; some say they caught too many young ones an' threw 'em back dead. But the fact is, nobody knows.—Well, we used to like spellin' school. That was great fun. We'd have spellin' matches. An' there was arithmetic. We'd meet in the evenin's an' do arithmetic, too. We used to sing the multiplication table. Let's see, how did it go?"

Mrs. Rover began to sing, rocking back and forth in time with the rhythm :

"One times one is one,
One times two is two,
One times three is three,
One times four is four.

"Two times two is four,
Two times three is six, etc.

Then there was the 'five times' that we used to sing to the tune of 'Yankee Doodle.'

"Five times five is twenty-five,
Five times six is thirty,
Five times seven is thirty-five,
Five times eight is forty, etc.

Then we used to have sewin' bees, we girls. Oh, those were great times!"

Mrs. Rover sat back in her chair and looked out of the window dreamily. At that moment voices were heard outside. The door was thrown open and in came Captain Grumpus followed by the two boys. Mrs. Rover looked up hopefully. Then her face fell.

"Oh, I hoped perhaps you'd seen Charley's boat," she said.

"Now don't you go worritin'," said the captain gruffly but good-naturedly. "Charley ain't no fool. He knows how to take keer o' himself in a leetle storm like this 'ere. He'll be along by an' by."

"Yes, of course he's all right," agreed Mrs. Rover.

"Now show us the violin that you made, please," cried the boys.

The captain retired to an inner room from which he emerged with a very pretty violin in his hand. It was made of bird's eye maple, polished and finished carefully, as perfect as a violin need be.

"I made it all, every bit, with this 'ere jack-knife," said the captain proudly, drawing a knife from his pocket to prove his words.

"He can play on it, too," said Mrs. Rover, as proud as he, rocking back and forth in her chair.

Captain Grumpus sat down and played "Yankee Doodle" on the fiddle.

"Wot nex'?" he inquired. "I got a short repotoor. Here goes 'Money Musk.' I'll hev ter practice up afore I can play anythin' else."

The captain played very well indeed. The children were delighted. So was the captain himself. So was Mrs. Rover. Even One Cat and Two Cat seemed to enjoy the music, for they purred a deep accompaniment and winked and blinked ecstatically with their big yellow eyes.

"I just know he is safe," whispered Kathryn to Mrs. Rover as they said good-bye.

"I ought not to have worried," said Mrs. Rover. "But it's kinder rememberin', you know. You don't get over it, quite. An' you came an' talked an' helped me to pass the time. I did enjoy it so! Come again, dear."

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLAMBAKE

"HELLO the house! Helloo-o!" came two voices which echoed back and forth from the rocks in the direction of the Jamison house.

"Halloo, you!" came answering voices from the opposite direction.

Heads were thrust from the open dining-room windows of the Gay cottage. The family was at breakfast, and this was an early disturbance.

"It's the fellows," announced Roger, napkin in hand, drawing his head back into the room after a wave of the hand to the two approaching figures.

"I wonder what's up?" said Jack. Both boys ran to the piazza and waited for their friends to come up.

"Their breakfast will be cold," said Mrs. Gay, looking at the boys' plates.

"It is their lookout," said Mr. Gay.

"Say!" cried Herbert, breathlessly, as the boys came running up. "We've got a scheme for to-day,—what, haven't you finished your breakfast yet? Go in then and finish it. We'll tell you afterward."

"No, come in and tell us now,—and have some breakfast," said Roger.

"Breakfast? We finished ours hours,—well, minutes—ago. No, thank you. But we'll tell you all about our scheme while you finish yours."

"A scheme, is it?" inquired Mr. Gay, passing his cup for more coffee; "I thought something had happened. I was afraid the baby had swallowed a collar button or got the measles or something."

"I am glad it is not that," laughed Mrs. Gay. "Sit down, boys, and tell us the scheme."

"Father and Mother said we might have a clambake," announced Herbert. "Can't we have it to-day? And will you all come?"

"Father won't be back from the city till Saturday," added Ralph. "He hates clambakes,

he says ; so we thought we might as well have it while he is away."

"Who will dig the clams?" inquired Mr. Gay. "Charley Rover is out deep sea fishing—safe somewhere, let us hope. He cannot get them. And the captain is too stiff in his poor old joints. I should hate to ask him. You boys do not know where to find clams."

"Oh, yes, that is part of the scheme," cried Herbert. "Captain Garry showed us where to find the clams. We know. Don't we, fellows?"

"Of course we do," said Roger and Jack and Ralph loftily. "You leave the clams to us. But you can get the other things."

"Other things?" inquired Mr. Gay. "That means potatoes and corn and bread and butter and salt and pepper and coffee and pie and cake and ice-cream and ——"

"No! No!" laughed Herbert. "We don't want a lot of things. Just clams will do. But Mother says she will bring some corn, and we can roast it in the ashes."

"That will be very nice," said Mrs. Gay.

"And we will bring some potatoes to cook in the ashes, too."

"We got a watermelon yesterday," remarked Mr. Gay. "We really must take that."

"A watermelon! Just the thing!" cried Roger. "I wonder who will carry it?"

"We shall have to quarrel over that privilege," said Mr. Gay.

"It's all settled, then," said Herbert. "Finished? Come on, then, and dig the clams."

The boys ran off in high glee and with a very important air, to dig the clams. The clambake was to be at one o'clock. They worked hard, and collected "enough clams," Roger said, "to feed an army." On the way back they met Cap'n Grumpus, and told him of their success.

"So you've got yer clams fer the clambake, eh?" inquired the captain, taking out his corn-cob pipe and regarding the boys with his funny, pop-eyed expression. "You're smart uns, you be. Git many?"

"Oh, heaps!" chorused the boys. "Enough for everybody. Bouncers, too."

"Where'd ye git 'em?" inquired the captain.

"Down at Horseshoe Beach, where you showed us, you know," answered Roger. "It's a great place."

"We've picked out just the spot to have the fire, too," added Herbert.

Captain Grumpus surveyed the boys' muddy clothes and dirty faces. Then he looked inquiringly around.

"Where'd ye put 'em?" he asked.

"The clams? Why, down in the sand. We buried them, you know, so they'd keep fresh. We sha'n't have dinner for two hours yet."

"How'll ye tell where to find 'em?"

"Oh, we looked out for that. Trust us!" laughed the boys proudly. "We stuck up a stick, so we can go right to the place."

Captain Garry Grumpus blew a few puffs from his pipe. Then his shoulders began to shake violently, and his face grew red.

"What are you shaking so for, Cap'n?" asked Jack anxiously. "You haven't got cold, have you? Are you chilly?"

"Shakin' palsy, I reckon," gurgled the captain, between shakes. "I git an attack some-

times. Feel one comin' on now. Eh? No, thanks. I ain't fond o' clams, so I won't join ye this time. So long!"

Captain Grumpus, pipe in hand, watched the muddy, bedraggled group until it disappeared over the slope of the hill. Then he shook the ashes from his pipe and crammed it hastily into his pocket; leaped to his feet and hurried to the fish house, from which he presently emerged with a basket and long spade. Shouldering these, he limped away as fast as his rheumatism would allow in the direction of Horseshoe Beach.

At half-past twelve o'clock a procession passed along the grassy wood path and wound its way toward Horseshoe Beach. At the head of the procession marched Mr. Gay, trailing behind him a large watermelon. He had very cleverly driven a nail in each end and fastened a string to the nails, so it was not so difficult a matter to bring the watermelon, after all. Of course it caught on every tree root, stone and bush that it met and stuck there, bringing Mr. Gay to sudden halts, once pulling him over so that he nearly sat down on the watermelon. And of

course every time Mr. Gay stopped suddenly the whole procession stopped and ran into one another, causing some confusion. But no one minded at all.

Next to Mr. Gay came Mrs. Jamison with the baby, whom nobody thought of leaving behind. Did she not enjoy picnics and have a better time than any one else? How she laughed and crowed and bubbled over with mirth!

Then came Mrs. Gay with a coffee-pot, cream and cups, which she would not entrust to any one but herself. Next came Herbert with the corn jauntily strung on a string. He waved it about so recklessly that Roger, who came behind him with a basket of fried turnovers, had to dodge constantly to avoid it.

Then came Ann with some bread, wooden plates and Japanese napkins, Kathryn with a pail of butter and the sugar, Ralph with a corn-popper and lastly Jack with salt and pepper.

"How good those clams are going to taste!" exclaimed Mrs. Gay. "I do not know when I have tasted a clam."

"I have not tasted one for ages, either," said

Mrs. Jamison. "And Baby has never tasted one, have you, Baby?"

"I hope you got plenty of them, boys," said Mr. Gay.

"Oh, we got heaps and heaps of them, Mr. Gay," answered Herbert. "Didn't we, Roger? And they were the biggest ones I ever saw. My, I feel as though I could eat a cart-load myself."

"I'm nearly starved," said Ralph. "How long does it take to cook clams?"

"About three-quarters of an hour, more or less," replied Mrs. Gay.

"The potatoes and corn will have to cook in the ashes for half an hour at least," said Mrs. Jamison.

"And it will take some time to get the fire ready to cook them," said Mr. Gay, striding forward at a quicker pace and causing the watermelon to make wild leaps in the air, which greatly amused Baby Clare.

"So don't get too hungry, children," said Mrs. Gay.

"I hope we have not forgotten anything," said Mr. Gay suddenly, turning about and surveying

the procession which promptly fell all over itself. "Well, we certainly do look like a gypsy troop. Where are the salt and pepper? We must have them!"

"I have them," cried Jack, waving a box in his hand.

"Good! I am relieved," said Mr. Gay, starting on again.

Suddenly Mrs. Gay stopped, causing the procession to fall over itself again.

"Where are the forks?" she asked in despair. No one answered. There were no forks.

"What, no soap?" quoted Mr. Gay. "I mean, no forks?"

There was still no answer.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Jamison. "Why does one ever use forks? Fingers are much better—at a clambake."

"I wouldn't use a fork if I had one!" declared Herbert.

"Fingers are better," said Kathryn.

"And more convenient, too," said Ann.

"And don't have to be washed afterward," said Jack wisely.

"You mean that they are easier to wash, I hope," corrected his father. "Well, as nobody seems to care about forks, we will proceed."

He started forward. In a few minutes he stopped suddenly. It was partly because the watermelon leaped into a bush and stuck there. Every one fell against every one else like a house of cards.

"Oh!" exclaimed Kathryn, plucking the corn-popper from the back of her hair, "look out, Ralph!"

Ralph apologized and shouldered the popper, nearly putting Jack's eye out.

"What is the matter now?" laughed Mrs. Gay. "Have we forgotten something else?"

Mr. Gay was feeling excitedly in his pockets. Then he sank down upon the watermelon with a look of despair, still searching in his pockets.

"Matches!" he groaned. "We are lost without those. I took my match-box out to fill it. Where did I put it?"

Every one looked aghast. This was a calamity. Then Roger produced the match-box.

"You left it on the table, Papa," he said. "I wondered how soon you would miss it."

Mr. Gay leaped to his feet with a sigh of relief and seized the string that fastened the watermelon. The procession proceeded.

"The next time you stop suddenly, please let me know, Mr. Gay," said Ralph. "Jack has been pouring salt into my ear."

"He ought to have put some pepper in, too, while he was about it," said Roger.

"These little diversions and pauses give me a chance to rest, anyway," remarked Mr. Gay in a grieved tone. "This watermelon is heavy, I would have you know. Very heavy."

At that moment the string that held the watermelon broke! I will not attempt to tell what followed; how Mrs. Jamison, Baby Clare, Mrs. Gay, Mr. Gay and the watermelon, with the others on top of them, disentangled themselves from a mass of coffee-pots, cups, plates, turnovers, corn-poppers and other things; and, finding themselves unhurt, continued rejoicing on their way to Horseshoe Beach.

At last, after much laughing and commotion,



SOON A FIRE WAS BLAZING

the gypsy band reached the beach. The "traps" were deposited. A large rock was selected for the fireplace, well away from the trees so as to be perfectly safe; the children scattered to and fro collecting driftwood; soon a fire was blazing and crackling cheerfully at the base of the rock where it was sheltered from the wind; and a great pile of wood lay ready to burn. It was wonderful sport to be able to "play with fire" to their hearts' content, here on the beach. Great pieces of driftwood were thrown on one after another, and dry seaweed which made a fine crackling and smoke. The potatoes were shoved underneath and carefully covered so that they would cook not too fast; water was brought from the spring in the woods ready for the coffee which was to be made the last minute.

"Now get your clams, boys, and we will cover them with the wet seaweed and cook them to a turn," said Mr. Gay.

The four boys stood in a little group looking out toward the water.

"Well, where are the clams?" inquired Mr. Gay, turning toward them.

"We —— Oh, dear!" exclaimed Roger.

"The tide —— How stupid of us!" cried Herbert, turning on his heel and stamping.

Ralph kicked the sand. His lip quivered.

"Oh, dear—dear!" cried Jack, bursting into tears.

"Why, what in the world is the matter, boys?" asked Mrs. Gay anxiously. "What has happened?"

"There are the clams!" cried Roger, laughing shamefacedly. "There! See? Out in the water!" He pointed to where a stick stood far out in the water.

"We were numbskulls!" cried Herbert. "We forgot that the tide was just turning; and we buried the clams, pail and all, in the sand, so they'd keep fresh. What shall we do, Mr. Gay? We'll start to work and dig some more."

Mr. Gay looked at the stick, then around at the beach, which was growing smaller and smaller.

"I am afraid it is too late for that," he said. "The tide is too high. I calculated that it would reach the fire in time to put it out, after we had finished our dinner. But the clams are

further down. Well, we shall have to do without, that is all."

"Never mind, boys," said Mrs. Gay, hastily, seeing the boys' mortification. "We shall not starve. There are potatoes and corn, and we will toast the bread in the corn-popper. We shall do very well. And we will have another clambake another day. Come, let us laugh. It is a good joke, really."

But the boys stood crestfallen and angry. The clambake that was to have been so successful bade fair to be a complete failure.

All of a sudden a dry cough sounded from somewhere behind them. They turned and looked in the direction of the woods. There, on the beach above them, stood Captain Grumpus with his pipe in his mouth and his hands buried deep in the pockets of his pea-jacket. A mischievous twinkle was in his eye.

"Thought I'd come to the clambake arter all," he said. "But I'm sorry I can't stay. Got some fish ter clean. But I brought ye a few more clams. 'Fraid ye wouldn't hev enough. Hed these, 'n' didn't know what ter do

with 'em. Hope ye can use 'em.—No, thank ye, can't stay a minute."

And the good old captain, with a wave of the hand toward the basket of clams at his feet, turned and walked hastily away, thus tactfully avoiding explanations and thanks.

"Three cheers for Captain Grumpus!" exclaimed Mr. Gay.

"The old brick!" cried Herbert.

"The old brick!" repeated Roger.—"But how did he find out?"

"Yes, how did he know?" asked Ralph and Jack.

The three cheers and a whole menagerie of tigers rose high over Horseshoe Beach and, echoing to and fro from the woods and cliffs, warmed the heart of the old captain as he limped toward his lonely fish house.

In less than no time the clams were reposing snugly and warmly on a bed of seaweed. More seaweed was placed over them, and they were soon steaming nicely, along with the potatoes and corn on the ashes and hot stones of the fire. Fresh logs, sticks and seaweed were piled on a

little to one side so as not to burn the eatables. The coffee-pot stood ready to be put on the last minute, and the bread likewise lay ready to be toasted on the embers. In the meantime the big fire blazed and roared. A column of smoke rose merrily and floated out over the water. The children vied with one another in throwing on great sticks and stumps, growing hungrier every minute from their exertions.

At last everything was done. The gypsy band sat in a circle while the ashes were drawn aside, and out came the clams, done to a turn. So were the potatoes and corn. Then the clams were dipped into little shell cups of melted butter and clam juice, and eaten hungrily. Mrs. Gay toasted bread on the corn-popper; the coffee was passed about, steaming hot, and every one was soon eating his fill. When they had had all they wanted of the clams, they ate the delicious fried turnovers and, last but not least, the watermelon.

Then the dishes,—there were none to speak of except coffee cups and a few spoons, for the clams had been eaten with the fingers and the

potatoes cut in two and eaten with butter and salt, as was the corn. How good they tasted ! And the dishes were washed by the ocean. It was great sport to stand the cups in a row and watch the biggest wave sweep forward and into them, cleaning them beautifully.

The tide was coming in fast. As little Ann stooped forward to pick up the coffee-pot which lay near the fire, a great wave dashed over the rock and splattered her from head to foot. Then a wave crept up around the rock and sizzled into the fire. Then another crept around the other side and leaked into the glowing coals with a great spluttering. Then every wave leaped into the fire.

"It is the height of the tide," said Mrs. Gay. "We shall have to help the ocean put out the fire. I do not believe it will come up any higher. See, the line of seaweed has been reached." She picked up a stone and threw it into the fire. They all did likewise. Gradually they quenched the blaze. A heap of stones covered the spot where the fire had been. The water dashed and splattered around it, but did not come any higher. The picnic was over.

CHAPTER XX

THE TIDE RIVER

THE Jamisons left the following day. Little Ann Farthingale went home the day after that. One would hardly have recognized the round-faced, bright-eyed little girl, with skin brown as a berry from the ocean winds and sunlight, as the pale, thin child who had arrived two weeks before. Her mind was full of all sorts of new impressions that the beautiful island and the companionship of children had given her. In her trunk were souvenirs of the island : stones, shells, feathers and little trinkets of all kinds.

“If I never go anywhere again I shall have something to think of all my life,” said Ann, as she kissed Mrs. Gay good-bye. “I shall live every minute over and over again. And I shall tell Auntie all about everything, too, so it will be almost the same as if she had come herself.”

"You have given just as much pleasure as you have taken, my dear child," said Mrs. Gay.

"And we shall all miss you very much."

"I shall write you a letter soon in the secret alphabet, Kate," whispered Ann. "And you will answer soon, will you not?"

"Indeed I will," answered Kathryn, giving Ann another hug. Then the carriage was at the door, the small quaint figure was stowed away in it, leaving a dear little face looking at them with glowing eyes and a tiny brown hand that waved good-bye until the carriage was out of sight.

The boys and their father went fishing that day with Captain Grampus.

"It'll help to occupy his mind and keep him from worritin'," said Mrs. Rover approvingly as they took a noisy departure. Then the plucky little woman busied herself with household tasks, humming cheerfully. But she went often to the window.

"Poor woman! Poor woman!" sighed Mrs. Gay.

Ten days had passed since Charley had gone.

Kathryn missed her little companion and felt lonesome and sad without her.

"You and I might walk across the Long Beach and watch the tide come in over Death Trap Rocks," said Kathryn's mother. "I have been planning to go all summer. It is a wonderful place to see. We might take our supper on the rocks. How would you like to do that, Kate?"

Kathryn was delighted with this plan, and in half an hour she and her mother were walking briskly along the road, bordered now with its autumn richness of color. Goldenrod and asters shone brilliantly in the sunshine. The air was clear and crisp and the sky was the deepest blue imaginable. It was impossible to be lonesome or sad or unhappy on such a day. Nature seemed to promise that all things were as they should be, and to challenge any one to think otherwise.

Mrs. Gay hummed a tune as she walked; Kathryn skipped and pranced from one side of the road to the other. Now and then both of them would stop to pick the luscious black-

berries that grew by the roadside. Soon the marshes lay beside them, beautiful and rich in color as only salt marshes can be. The wind rippled and raced across them and disappeared in the distance out to sea; then came dancing and chasing back again.

"It looks like an immense Turkish carpet, does it not, Kate?" said her mother. "See, there is a blue heron standing knee deep watching for fish. There goes his long beak with a sudden dart into the water. He has caught it. Ah, there he goes, with spread wings. How lovely!"

Soon they turned a corner and Long Beach was spread before them.

A mile walk along the beach, over the smooth, hard sand, brought them at last to "Death Trap Rocks," so called because so many vessels had been wrecked there. Dead Man's Cove lay just beyond.

A tiny, trickling stream ran down the beach to the ocean.

"I remember this little stream," said Mrs. Gay as she and Kathryn stepped over it. "It

connects with the tide river. How natural it looks ! ”

Death Trap Rocks were gruesome and wild. Even now, when the tide was just beginning to come in, they looked menacing enough ; huge, black, heartless giants that had stood there stolidly watching ships go to pieces at their feet, and listening with cruel pleasure to the cries of drowning sailors.

Kathyrn and her mother settled themselves in comfortable seats on the rocks and watched the tide come in, up and up, round and round, until only a small stretch of sandy beach lay behind the rocks where they sat, and along by the way they had come. The sunset over the water was a wonderful sight, bathing everything with crimson and orange light and myriad combinations and reflections of color.

“ We must not stay too long here,” said Mrs. Gay, turning about and then getting quickly to her feet. “ Why, how high the tide has come ! It cannot be nearly high yet. We had better hurry a little. Say good-bye to the sunset.”

They started back along the narrow strip of

sandy beach which when they had come over it a while before had stretched far, far down to the water's edge. Mrs. Gay stopped suddenly and screamed. They had come to the spot where the trickling brook had been. It was now a roaring river !

Gurgling and boiling it poured back from the ocean, many rods wide and undoubtedly deep.

"Why, what—*what* does it mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Gay. "The water must have worn a path down over the sand; and that path has been widening and deepening during all these years, so that now it is the river itself that connects with the ocean when the tide is high."

The light of the sun, already set, cast a lurid glow over the foaming river before them as they stood at the water's edge. Up came the water and covered their feet. The tide was still rising, would rise much higher. They looked around, back at the rocks that they had just left, and their hearts suddenly leaped. A narrow strip of sand, rising up in a little hill at the turn of the shore, just as the sea had washed it up, was all that remained except Death Trap Rocks.

And were the rocks covered at high tide? They did not know. Before them they could see the river growing deeper and stronger every moment. Farther and farther back, step by step they went, as the tide came after them. It was like some bad dream, too dreadful to be true!

Mrs. Gay, her face pale but firm, turned to the trembling child by her side.

"There is just one of two things for us to do," she said. "Let us be calm, Kate dear, and not get frightened and lose our heads. We must either try to cross this river now or we must wait until the tide goes down enough to allow us to cross. If we wait it must be for three or four hours at least. The tide is not high yet and it must be some time before the water gets really shallow. It will be pitch dark in two hours. But the trouble is, I have never stayed here until high tide. I cannot remember whether the rocks are covered or not. Let us go back and see."

They walked back silently and calmly, those two brave ones, to where the rocks loomed,

black and lowering in the afterglow. Mrs. Gay climbed the highest rock and examined the top, the advancing waves booming and crashing below her. A wave leaped at her as she turned to descend and showered her with spray as if to threaten her with what might happen. A moment's scrutiny of the seaweed and marks on the rock was enough. Mrs. Gay looked very pale as she joined Kathryn.

"I—it looks as though—I believe we had better try to cross the river," she said. "It may not be as deep as it looks. But first, let us call for help."

Over and over again they raised their voices and called. But where could help come from in that lonely spot? An old, tumble down fish house back on the bluffs had been the only sign of habitation that they had passed for two miles. A great stillness, broken by the booming of the waves, was the only response to their cries.

They stepped forward and stood at the water's edge. How strange life was! So short a time ago everything had been happy and bright and full of promise and now ——

"We will try to wade, Kate," came her mother's calm voice. "We had better keep hold of hands; and do your best to keep your footing. We may have to swim. You can swim a little. And you can tread water.—What is that?"

They listened. The sound that they had just heard was repeated. It was a cry. Kathryn and her mother called out together at the top of their voices. A voice answered! Then they saw a figure on the opposite bank of the river waving its arms wildly at them. It was a fisherman in a pea-jacket. Pointing to the water he shook his head emphatically. Then he waved his arms, nodded his head, and with an encouraging wave of the hand hurried out of sight behind the dunes. Would he come back in time? He certainly meant to come back. But what could he do, and how long would it take for him to come? The strip of sand was but a few yards wide now. How triumphantly the waves roared! How stolid and grim the rocks looked!

After ages had passed, it seemed, they heard a creak of oars and a boat containing the fisherman came down the river and stopped near

them. Kathryn and her mother stared at the man in the boat for a moment, then both cried :

“Charley! Charley Rover! Where did you come from?”

“The same, thankee,” grinned Charley as he helped them into the boat. Guess was sitting on the seat beside his master. He barked a joyous welcome to his acquaintances.

Charley Rover turned the boat about carefully and began to row back up-stream with the tide. They went slowly. The afterglow lit up the western sky and shone with soft, rich reflections on the water, the desolate sand dunes and the marshes toward which they were rowing. It lit up Charley’s face, which looked thinner than when he had gone away.

“We thought you were drowned,” said Kathryn. “We have worried and worried. Where have you been?”

“Wall, I reckon I come back at jest the right time,” laughed Charley. “Ye’d be’n drowned yerselves in ’bout half an hour.—Say, that was a narrer squeak! Was ye goin’ ter wade acrost the river?”

"It seemed the only thing to do," said Mrs. Gay. "Is it very deep?"

"Ye couldn't ha' done it," was the reply. "Ye'd 'a' be'n drowned sure as fish-hooks."

"And the rocks are covered at high tide?" asked Kathryn. "Does the water really cover them?"

"Cover 'em? Yis!" cried Charley, pausing in his rowing to stare at them. "Don't ye never go to Death Trap Rocks at high tide agin. They're worn away, ye know. Tide didn't use ter cover 'em, but it does now.—Gosh!"

Charley wagged his head impressively. Kathryn and her mother shivered.

"You have saved our lives, Charley," said Mrs. Gay. "Providence must have sent you to this forlorn spot at the moment when you were needed. But how did you happen to be here? Do tell us."

"Wall," said Charley, "ye've sp'iled my little surprise, but I fergive yer. Fact is, I didn't git in till an hour ago. An' I was reck'nin' ter run up an' see Ma fust thing. But I'm afraid she'll be in bed, an' it'll scare her if I wake her

up. So I've just put in ter Clam Cove an' come down here ter my shanty fer the night.—Was Ma much worried?"

"She has worried a good deal about you, I know," said Mrs. Gay. "Do go and see her to-night, Charley, if you can."

"I couldn't help it, yer know," said Charley. "I got hurt. This was the trouble."

Charley stopped rowing and lifted his cap from his head. A long strip of plaster covered one side. His black hair stood up thickly around it.

"Oh! Oh! You have been hurt!" exclaimed Kathryn.

"Yep. That's why I couldn't come afore. I jest wanted ye ter know. Here we be. Say—I guess I will see Ma to-night. I'm sorry she's worried. I can manage it, I guess."

The dory drew up before a small landing place on the marshes. A tiny hut stood back a little way on higher ground. Charley, walking slowly, for he was still weak, led the way across the marshes until they came to the road, Guess, as usual, close to his heels.

"There! Now ye know the way home. It's only a step ter yer house an' ef ye don't mind goin' alone and won't tell, I'd like ter surprise the folks ter-morrer. Kinder fun, eh?—Now I'm goin' to see Ma. I'll bet she'll be glad ter see me."

"Indeed she will, the dear woman!" said Mrs. Gay. "Don't keep her in suspense another moment. Good-night."

"Oh, Charley! I have an idea!" cried Kathryn suddenly. "We are going to have an exhibition to-morrow in the studio. Your mother and Captain Grumpus are coming over to see it at three o'clock. Why don't you appear suddenly and give Papa and the boys a big surprise! Wouldn't that be lovely, Mama?"

"That is a good idea, Kate," said Mrs. Gay. "Will you do that, Charley? We shall all want to hear your story. What a blow you must have had! Is your head well enough to allow you to go about like this?"

"Yep. Head's all right now," grinned Charley. "Say, that will be a joke, won't it? But I ain't got much ter tell."

"We shall have something to tell, for you

saved our lives, and we shall not forget it," said Mrs. Gay.

"That wa'n't nothin'. Glad I was there, though. Tide's high jest about now," said Charley.—"Wall, so long, ma'am! So long, Katie. I'll be there!"

Charley Rover walked jauntily off down the road, his inseparable companion trotting at his heels.

"We must not tell our adventure until to-morrow," said Mrs. Gay. "We might give away Charley's secret if we did. We will tell our story after Charley has told his. And our story will be a surprise to Mrs. Rover and the captain, for I am sure that Charley will not tell them that he saved our lives."

"Oh, isn't it exciting?" cried Kathryn. "I can hardly wait till to-morrow."

The house seemed strangely still when Kathryn and her mother climbed the piazza steps and looked about in the gathering darkness for some sign of life. They had expected to find Mr. Gay and the boys watching for them. But there was no one in sight.

"Papa! Roger! Jack! Where are you?" called Kathryn.

Mrs. Rover appeared in answer to Kathryn's call. She had on her shawl and was ready to go home. She put her finger to her lips and laughed slyly.

"Hush! You will wake them," she said. "They must be fast asleep by now. They came home about an hour ago. They didn't want any supper, they said. They went straight to bed. I guess 'twas pretty rough outside. They looked kind o' pale. But they'll sleep it off, an' be all right in the mornin'. Deep sea fishin's mor'n a good many folks can stand."

Mrs. Rover wrapped her shawl about her and hurried home to the great surprise and joy that awaited her there.

So Kathryn and her mother found it an easy task to keep their story until the next day.

CHAPTER XXI

PRIZES

ON a certain crisp, glorious day in the latter part of September there was great excitement in the Gay household. It was the day of the long anticipated exhibition. The "studio" was decorated with green branches. Great bunches of goldenrod, asters and "queen's lace" gave an air of festivity to the room. Some late blooming wild roses stood in a corner by themselves.

When Mr. Gay threw open the door and bade them enter there were many delighted cries of surprise. The exhibition was finer even than they had expected. The wood carving bench that occupied one end of the studio made an admirable showcase. Tables or boards laid across chairs and decorated with green stood on two other sides. The exhibition occupied the entire space!

At one end of the room Jack's pebbles were

displayed. Gradually the collection had grown, the less desirable stones had been thrown away and choicer ones put in their place, until the result was a really fine assortment of beautiful stones of wonderful variety of coloring. The black cloth on which they lay showed off their colors to advantage. There were rich green stones, yellows and reds; "lucky" stones with stripes of contrasting color; stones showing interesting stages in geologic development that Jack as yet only guessed at. In the center stood the dark red, velvety piece of jasper, a rare prize. Each specimen whose name they had been able to find was neatly labeled. Jack's father was not a geologist. There were many question marks that showed that they were still in doubt as to the identity of some of the specimens. But they might know in time. Jack had learned more in making his collection than it was possible to estimate.

Next to the stones lay the shells and sea things that all the children had found. These, too, were neatly labeled. How much the children had learned in hunting up the names!

There was some pleasure in learning about things which they themselves had actually found. The shells were a marvel of variety. There was a "sand dollar"; quite a rarity on that shore. When it had been impossible to bring home the specimens the children had written a description of what they had found.

In the center of the bench, in the place of honor, stood the Sea Dog! Beneath him was a label which ran: "Animal of unknown species found on shore after a storm. Christened 'Sea Dog' for want of a better name."

Next to the sea things came Kathryn's books of pressed wild flowers, nicely labeled. How much painstaking work and careful study it meant Kathryn herself only knew. Her mother had helped her on rainy afternoons, which Kathryn remembered as among the happiest and most interesting of the summer. How lovely they looked on the white background! Narrow strips of paper were pasted over the stems in two places, fastening them neatly to the page. Then came the mounted sea mosses, an exhibition in themselves. It seemed almost

impossible that such wonderful colors could have grown anywhere.

Roger had made a study of wild birds; and though he could not show what he had found and learned, he had written down an interesting account of some of his discoveries. He had made a really wonderful collection of feathers which he had found during his walks. Many of these he had identified. Such a fascinating revelation they were of textures, shapes and colors! Birds' feathers were a study in themselves, Roger had found. He had laid them on pieces of paper of dull browns and grays that brought out the colors in these bits of plumage.

Roger had made a collection of leaves, too, mounted nicely. He and the other children had learned in a general way to recognize the common varieties of trees.

Then came Mrs. Gay's baskets! These were new to the children, and how they shouted when they saw them! There were baskets of all shapes and sizes; big baskets and little baskets; round baskets and oblong baskets; high baskets and flat baskets. And each one

was more lovely than the last. Mrs. Gay had found the grass on the marshes; had experimented with the different kinds; had chosen what was strong and durable and discarded what was brittle and weak. She had sewed some of them with the grass itself, but most of them she had sewed together with raffia, inventing her own designs. Mrs. Gay was a wonderful woman. She had found the sweet grass, too, and had woven it into her baskets. There was truly no end, as she said, to the things that they had found to do that summer.

"And what have you got, Papa?" asked the children.

"Here are my photographs," replied their father. "I have had them developed and have printed them myself on purpose for the exhibition."

The photographs were mostly snap-shots of the people and familiar scenes of the island. They were very beautiful and interesting. But the most interesting of all were several pictures of the young ospreys, standing on the nest. One had its wings outspread and was looking

straight into the eyes of the camera with the expression that Roger remembered well.

Across one corner of the room hung a hammock made of seine twine, like the fishermen's nets. Kathryn had made it all herself, under Mrs. Rover's watchful eye; and a very nice and serviceable hammock it was; one that could be left out-of-doors in all weathers without fear of injury, and which dried after being wet in the rain in no time at all. Kathryn received much praise for it, and felt very proud.

While they were examining the collections there came a knock on the door which caused Kathryn and her mother to start and exchange glances. But it was only Mrs. Rover and Captain Grumpus who had come to see the exhibition.

How happy those two looked! Dear little Mrs. Rover was in a flutter of enjoyment; and the captain's face shone like a rosy apple.

It was a pleasure to see them admire and exclaim over everything. The captain gave vent to his astonishment and admiration every little while by expressions such as, "Wall, I gum it!"

or "Ef thet don't beat all!" "Great fish-hooks! Thet's a beauty!" "I'm derved ef this ain't the best show I ever see!" was his final judgment.

Then Kathryn read her composition about the wild flowers and trees that grew on the island. Jack told all that he had learned about the rocks, how they change in shape and form; where special kinds of rock were to be found; and how a deep river had gradually worn a way through two of the islands until the sea had burst in and taken its place. It was very interesting. Jack wound up his remarks by declaring that he intended to be a "gewhologist" when he grew up.

"Good fer you, sonny!" roared Captain Grampus, stamping on the floor and clapping his hands. "A gewhologist ye'll be, an' a good un, I'll bet."

Then the prizes were distributed. Kathryn received a botany book by Professor Matthews, with outline pictures of the flowers and descriptions of them.

"You can color the pictures, Kate," said her mother. "But you must do it carefully and

get the colors exact. As soon as you find a flower you can color it in your book, with the flower itself as a copy."

Roger received a book about birds, and Jack a book about trees. The children all together received a grand prize for "a very interesting exhibition," as Mr. Gay called it. It was a wonderful book called "The Sea Beach at Ebb Tide."

Suddenly there came a resounding knock on the door. All started and stared at one another in surprise, except Kathryn and her mother, Mrs. Rover and the captain. The captain winked at Kathryn in such a funny way that she nearly burst out laughing.

"Come in!" called Mrs. Gay.

The door opened, and there in the doorway stood Charley Rover with Guess under his arm!

You may imagine what excitement there was. Charley lifted his little mother three times up in the air; Captain Grampus shook him by the shoulders growling, "Didn't I tell ye? 'Course he's come home safe! Here he is!" over and over again. Poor Guess was trodden

upon in the excitement but afterward he was hugged and petted until his ridiculous stub of a tail nearly wagged itself off.

“Take off your hat, Charley,” said his mother reprovingly. “Don’t forget your manners, son.”

Then Charley lifted his cap and exposed the great strip of plaster that extended from his ear to the crown of his head! Mr. Gay and the boys exclaimed at this sight.

“Tell us about it, Charley,” said Mr. Gay.

So Charley was made to sit down immediately and tell his story.

“Wall now,” began Charley, stroking the bristly head of Guess, who sat on his knee looking adoringly into his face, “there ain’t much ter tell. We was out beyond Smugglers’ Island when we saw the storm was comin’. We was makin’ fer Home Cove when this little shaver fell overboard. ’Twa’n’t his fault. Bob Sands run agin him; didn’t he, ole feller?—Wall, Bob says we couldn’t do nothin’, but I says ‘Yes!’ an’ I went after ’im in the dory. He was knockin’ about in a big sea, but I got ’im

all right. But in gettin' aboard we capsized an' I give my head a whop on the side o' the boat. Bob got us aboard, though. Life preserver. Guess was hangin' on ter me then, keepin' me up. I didn't know much fer a while after that. Bob got me over ter Home Cove, an' there I've be'n. Come home soon's we could, ye see. Didn't we, Guess, ole boy?"

"He came home at exactly the right time," said Mrs. Gay. "I will continue his story." And Mrs. Gay told how Charley had rescued Kate and herself from certain death.

"So Mama and Kathryn have known ever since last night that Charley had come back!" cried Roger.

"So have Mrs. Rover and Captain Grumpus," said Kathryn.

"And they never told us!" added Jack.

"That was so as to give you all a nice surprise to-day," laughed Mrs. Gay.

"And they never told us how near they came to being drowned!" exclaimed Roger.

"We should have had to tell about Charley if we had," said Kathryn.

"We ought to have a celebration in honor of Charley's return and your escape," said Mr. Gay.

"And to wind up the summer," added Mrs. Gay. "Let us have a 'musicale' to-morrow evening. Captain Grumpus will bring his violin and play to us. We shall expect you all three to-morrow evening at seven o'clock. That will be our last evening on the island. Good-bye, friends!"

The "music call," as the captain termed it, was a great success. The big living-room of "Eagle's Nest" was decorated with wild flowers and with a beautiful bunch of blossoms which Mrs. Rover had brought from her garden in honor of the occasion. A cheerful fire burned in the fireplace. Every one sat about looking very happy. Captain Grumpus and Charley wore their Sunday suits with a posy in the buttonhole. Mrs. Rover looked beaming and serene now that her son was safe at home again. She wore a sprig of pink in her black silk dress.

Mrs. Gay played and sang to them some old-fashioned songs that Mrs. Rover and the captain

had heard when they were children. After that they all joined in some old favorites. Captain Grumpus roared out a deep bass, beating time with his finger and rocking back and forth in great enjoyment. They sang one hymn tune after another. Then Captain Grumpus played "Money Musk" and "Yankee Doodle" on his fiddle. The children recited pieces. Lastly, Charley danced the "Sailor's Hornpipe," much to the children's delight; but dancing made the poor fellow's head dizzy, so he was obliged to stop in the middle of it.

After that they had ice-cream and cake which first had been sent over from the village on purpose for the party. Guess discovered that he was very fond of ice-cream and licked each plate clean; then barked for more, until his master declared that he was ashamed of him.

"I brought the childern each a present," said the captain. "I made 'em myself a purpose, so's ye won't fergit ole Cap'n Garry."

Roger's present was a full rigged ship about a foot long, beautifully made, with sails and everything complete. Jack had a dory with cunning

little seats, oars, rowlocks and rudder. Kathryn received a "mash board" and needle, carefully whittled and polished, with the captain's initials on it. The children were delighted.

"Good-bye, all! Good-bye! Good-bye!" "Don't forget to come again!" and with a last faint "Good-bye" the three figures disappeared in the darkness, leaving only the light of their waving lantern bobbing through the night.

"Good-bye to the Delectable Isle!" cried the Gays sadly as they looked up at the shining, peaceful stars, listened to the roar of the ocean and felt the spicy, salt air on their cheeks.

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